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EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

Report on the first, second and third regular sessions and annual session of 1997

Economic and Social Council
Official Records, 1997
Supplement No. 12

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Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

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United Nations, New York, 1997

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Part one

FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF 1997

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 20 to 24 January 1997

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Election of officers for 1997

1. The officers of the Executive Board for the year 1997 were elected as follows:

President: Dr. Mercedes Pulido de Briceño (Venezuela)

Vice-Presidents: Mr. Dino Beti (Switzerland)
Ms. Hazel de Wet (Namibia)
H.E. Ambassador Ngo Quang Xuan (Viet Nam)
Mr. Fikret Mamedali Pashayev (Azerbaijan)

B. Statements by the President and the Executive Director

2. The President expressed her gratitude for the honour bestowed on Venezuela through her election as President of the Executive Board. She looked forward to working with the other members of the Bureau as well as with all members and observers, the Executive Director, National Committees for UNICEF and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) during her tenure. She said that UNICEF had an important role to play in the world because of the many problems affecting children, including inequality, violence and poverty. Including the rights of the child on the international agenda was a significant achievement, but it was not enough because problems such as child labour and sexual exploitation continued to harm millions of children. It was well known that resources available to UNICEF were unequal to the daunting task facing the organization. One way of solving this problem would be to use the Executive Board as a forum for South-South cooperation and technical exchanges. The Board's programme of work for 1997 gave high priority to the balance between management excellence and the effectiveness of country programmes.

3. The Executive Director said that one of the most important events of recent weeks had been the appointment of Mr. Kofi Annan as Secretary-General of the United Nations. His predecessor, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was a strong supporter of UNICEF and she enjoyed a good working relationship with him. Under Mr. Annan's administration, UNICEF would continue to seek a close relationship with the United Nations system.

4. She said that perhaps the most crucial task for UNICEF and its partners was to support States in their efforts to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Parallel to the entry into force of the Convention in 1990 had been the World Summit for Children, which had adopted a broad-ranging, visionary Plan of Action that addressed the entire gamut of children's rights. Together, they defined the UNICEF agenda into the twenty-first century, as the Convention gave added force and legitimacy to the commitments made at the World Summit. Given that Africa was the continent where many of these issues were most strongly felt, UNICEF continued to view it as its region of highest priority. And as Africa must remain a priority because of the many challenges it faced, so too must the issue of girls.

5. Increasingly, UNICEF country programmes mirrored States' growing interest in meeting their new obligations as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and she cited the examples of India and Mali. Every UNICEF country programme reflected the situation in the country and was formulated after lengthy consultations with Governments and other development partners, using the Convention and World Summit Plan of Action as guidelines. This decentralization was one of the strengths of UNICEF, allowing it to respond to countries' and communities' priorities using a combination of service delivery,

capacity-building, empowerment and advocacy to help meet legal and moral obligations to children.

6. Another development concerned the implications of the Convention for industrialized countries. National Committees for UNICEF were increasingly becoming advocates for child rights in their own countries, in addition to their traditional fund-raising and education for development on behalf of UNICEF.

7. To do its work effectively, she said, UNICEF must be an efficient and well-managed agency. Since she became Executive Director in mid-1995, she had devoted much of her attention to management excellence throughout the organization. She stressed that measures being undertaken in that effort were not ends in themselves or happening in isolation from the UNICEF mission as an advocate for children. Every step to improve efficiency, accountability and transparency in UNICEF operations would lead to more effective use of resources. Throughout the process, UNICEF was emphasizing the essential importance of the country programme.

8. Addressing the issue of reform, she discussed areas of UNICEF cooperation with other members of the United Nations family, including work on harmonization of budget presentations, use of common premises in the field, harmonization of programme cycles and commitment to the resident coordinator system, as well as the organization's participation in the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and inter-agency task forces following up on recent international conferences.

9. In conclusion, she said that UNICEF, with its clear mandate, successful and timely programme delivery and effective fund-raising capacity, added strong value to the entire United Nations system. As an integral part of that system, UNICEF would continue to serve children effectively, to advocate for them and to mobilize resources on their behalf. UNICEF would continue to give women and children a voice in economic and social development agendas. Its 50 years of work on behalf of children had led to many successes, but many challenges remained. A strong, vital UNICEF was crucial to helping its partner Governments meet those challenges. (See E/ICEF/1997/CRP.2 for the full text of her remarks.)

C. Adoption of the agenda

10. The agenda of the session, as contained in document E/ICEF/1997/2 and Corr.2, was adopted. The agenda contained the following items:

Item 1: Opening of the session:

- (a) Election of the officers of the Executive Board for 1997
- (b) Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director

Item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work

Item 3: Country notes

Item 4: Implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF

Item 5: Operational paper on selected issues relating to UNICEF emergency interventions

Item 6:	Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 and 1996/33 on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations
Item 7:	Follow-up to relevant decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council
Item 8:	Follow-up to the audit of the Kenya country office: final report
Item 9:	Management Excellence Programme (MEP)
Item 10:	Harmonization of presentation of budgets: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF
Item 11:	Proposal on integrated budgeting in UNICEF
Item 12:	Revised budget for 1996-1997
Item 13:	Financial matters: 1/ (a) UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 1995 and report of the Board of Auditors (b) Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
Item 14:	Participation of UNFPA in the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP)
Item 15:	Oral report on the outcome of consultations on Executive Board/secretariat relations
Item 16:	Other matters
Item 17:	Closing of the session: remarks by the Executive Director and the President

11. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 66 observer delegations had submitted credentials for the session.

12. In addition, the Observer for Palestine had submitted credentials, as had seven United Nations agencies, the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF, the NGO Committee for UNICEF and 13 NGOs.

1/ Deferred from the third regular session of 1996.

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Country notes

Overview

13. The President reminded delegations that in accordance with Executive Board decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), in country notes, the secretariat informs the Board at an early stage of its preliminary ideas regarding the mix and weight given to programme strategies and priorities in UNICEF country programmes, including a brief description of other activities within each sector, to be used as a basis for further discussions in the recipient country. The Board comments on the country notes, and that information is shared with the concerned UNICEF country offices and their government partners. The final country programme recommendations (CPRs), to be presented to the Board at the September 1997 session on a "no objection" basis, would be prepared taking into account the comments made at the present session.

14. The Director, Programme Division, provided a global overview of the country notes and their preparation process. In keeping with the Executive Board's request, the notes had been reduced to four pages in length and there had been an effort to specify programme strategies as clearly as possible. In all cases, Governments themselves had coordinated the country note process, which involved the participation of bilateral and multilateral agencies, professional and research institutions, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women were increasingly being used to guide the preparation of country notes. The secretariat was paying increasing attention to issues of sustainability, strongly linked to the decentralization of services and national capacity development. More emphasis was being given to monitoring and evaluation processes and partnerships for children.

15. Many delegations expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its efforts to extend the process of consultation at country level to involve embassies, bilateral and multilateral donors and NGOs. One delegation requested a clearer focus on the overarching priorities of each country programme, saying that some country notes were vague, making it difficult to identify objectives and priorities, while others provided clear targets and statistics. The speaker said that there should be greater consistency between country notes, although these should not become standardized to the point where one was indistinguishable from another. Country programme goals and targets should be more specific and the objective of sustainability should be clearer. There should be greater analysis of the impact of previous country programmes. The Director, Programme Division, said that it was necessary to find a balance between the need for precision and comprehensiveness and the four-page limit for the country note. The secretariat had tried to provide as much relevant information as possible.

16. Another delegation asked if the general resource allocations contained in the country notes were arrived at using the current or revised criteria for the allocation of general resources. The Director replied that, in accordance with the Executive Board's decision, the secretariat was not implementing any new criteria for the allocation of general resources and the allocations in the country notes had been derived using the current criteria. The same delegation asked if the division of labour between New York headquarters, regional and country offices and their roles in preparing the country notes had been applied in conformity with ongoing discussions to decentralize and simplify the country programme preparation process. The Director said that regional management teams

(RMTs) had taken part in the preparation process. The country notes had been cleared jointly by the regional directors and the Director of Programme Division as part of a transitional arrangement.

17. One delegation said that the country notes should be more specific and that the links between situation analyses and country programme strategies should be explained more clearly. It would also be helpful if there were greater consistency in the terminology used to describe similar types of programmes. Another speaker suggested that it would be useful to specify the types of activities to be carried out for capacity-building and sustainability. A delegation suggested that country notes specify the activities of other actors in sectoral programmes. The Director said that the new Programme Manager System (PROMS), when implemented, would enable the secretariat to better monitor resource allocations by objective and specific programme indicators. Early consultations with recipient Governments and other partners at country level had clarified the linkages between the situation analysis, programme strategies, mid-term reviews and evaluations.

18. One delegation asked if a report prepared by a group of donor countries, "UNICEF Country Programming Process (Decision 1995/8) Country Notes: A Review of the First Experience (Non-Paper)", had been sent to UNICEF offices and had been taken into consideration during the preparation of the current series of country notes. The speaker suggested that the matrix showing which donors and agencies had participated in the consultative process be reintroduced. The Director said that the document had been shared with selected UNICEF offices, and efforts were being made to implement its recommendations. He noted the request for the matrix for future action.

19. At the request of one delegation, and given its relevance to the country programme preparation process, the Director outlined the views of UNICEF on a recent publication of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development entitled, "Shaping the 21st Century: The Role of Development Cooperation". The Director said that the development concepts espoused in the report were compatible with the goals of the World Summit for Children. The publication sets targets for poverty alleviation, women's empowerment and infant, under-five and maternal mortality reduction for the year 2015 and emphasizes the use of appropriate monitoring and evaluation indicators. It also emphasizes the importance of national capacity-building and advocates a global development partnership for the achievement of goals which UNICEF supports. The publication proposes the judicious use of official development assistance to redress the economic marginalization of poor nations, which would also benefit children.

Africa

20. The Regional Director for West and Central Africa introduced the country notes for Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau and Mali (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.1 - E/ICEF/1997/P/L.3) and provided an overview of the situation in the region, including a report on the situation in Liberia.

21. Several delegations expressed support for the country notes from the region, saying that all three notes reflected the countries' political commitments to the rights of children and women. A lack of resources, however, would constrain the development of basic social services. All three country notes contained strategies for programmes for child survival and development and were developing primary health care services based on the principles of the Bamako Initiative. One delegation stated that the country notes were generally valuable, although the quality of the documents varied.

22. A speaker said that poverty would continue to constrain the development of children and women, and that political instability represented a real danger to their well-being. Children and women were the first to suffer from war, and UNICEF must be an advocate for peace. The most effective form of empowerment was education, especially of women. The speaker also underlined the importance of training "ordinary" people in matters of hygiene.

23. Another delegation commended the Cameroon country note for describing concrete projects, target groups and details of the mechanics of local participation.

24. Commenting on the country note for Guinea-Bissau, delegations underlined the country's need for resources, the lack of which would constrain the development of social services. The Regional Director indicated that Guinea-Bissau needed more resources than were currently available and hoped that Executive Board members would respond to the need for resources so that programmes could move forward as planned.

25. Several delegations expressed support for the process of collaborative analysis and planning that had taken place in Mali and the use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the country programme. One delegation specifically referred to paragraph 9 of the country note, which referred to the inclusion of civil society, decentralization and focused geographic activities. Another speaker asked if there was scope for greater UNICEF support to the World Bank's activities in the area of education. While there had been considerable successes in health, human resource capacity-building should give higher priority to programme sustainability. A delegation questioned the feasibility of stated objectives, especially the objectives of reducing infant mortality rates by 30 per cent in five years and increasing female literacy rates from 14 to 40 per cent. Another speaker said that the reference to the country strategy note (CSN) as part of the planning process was an important step in the right direction. There should have been more detail about the proposed collaboration in water and sanitation, with the roles of other partners more clearly defined and the participation of communities given greater emphasis, so that the programme would be effective in promoting community ownership.

26. Another delegation commented on a recent visit to Mali. Favourable impressions included the commitment of both national leaders and the UNICEF team and the country's development priorities. Although rights-based programming was a new concept, there was also a new way of thinking about development in the country. The proposed strategies were realistic in the present context, but there would also be some risks because the strategies were new. As the country note was very theoretical, it would be necessary to share additional information with all partners to ensure a clear understanding of what was being proposed and exactly how it would be implemented. It might be helpful to include examples of how the rights-based approach would work at country level and to include indicators for measurement of change.

27. Another speaker cited the important role of Heads of State in development and congratulated Mali for promoting the rights-based approach and for its commitment to reducing disparity. However, limited economic growth would have an impact on the country's ability to give its full support to certain programme proposals.

28. The Regional Director confirmed the close collaboration between all partners in health and education in Mali. Educational reform was being planned, although the reforms had been delayed. UNICEF was working closely with the World Bank in the education sector, and while it could not duplicate the role of the Bank, it could complement its work. Sustainability and capacity development

were major issues in programming. Country programmes in the region were promoting the Bamako Initiative and alternative approaches to education as strategies to promote sustainability, with special emphasis on community involvement. Programme objectives had been decided upon through a process of consultation and consensus-building. Their achievability would depend on the inputs of many partners.

29. Asked if UNICEF activities in Liberia were confined to Monrovia, the Regional Director said that UNICEF normally provided basic services in such safe areas as Monrovia, Buchanan and Harbel, where 80 per cent of the population now lived. Otherwise, UNICEF carried out activities when access was possible, even as far as Voinjama and Tubmanburg. UNICEF also delivered services through cross-border operations.

30. While no country notes were submitted from the Eastern and Southern Africa region, the Regional Director provided an overview of the situation in the region. A delegation expressed support for the UNICEF country programme approach and its emphasis on inter-agency collaboration. The programming process was designed to strengthen the capacity of Governments, individuals and communities. Education should remain a priority, especially in view of the alarming increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS.

Middle East and North Africa

31. The Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa introduced the country note for Jordan (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.10) and provide a brief overview of developments in the region, including a report on UNICEF activities in Iraq.

32. A number of delegations endorsed the country note for Jordan. One delegation stated that in spite of progress in the situation of Jordanian children, there were still important needs to be met, and commended the strategy to support capacity-building and quality of services. A speaker said that he had visited the regional office in Amman and had been impressed by the energy and commitment of the staff and the Regional Director.

33. A delegation said that the children of Iraq were fortunate in that UNICEF was one of the parties participating in implementing humanitarian assistance as authorized by Security Council resolution 986 (1995). Another delegation said that although children's needs in the north were more acute, the situation of children throughout Iraq was quite difficult.

34. Commenting on a reference to assistance to Palestinian women and children in the Regional Director's presentation, one delegation commended the 20/20 initiative and said that more external assistance was needed as part of the initiative.

35. Another speaker referred to the recent successful visit to Morocco by members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which had taken place after the Government had presented its first report to the Committee. The Government's report was being updated in light of comments received.

Asia

36. The Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific introduced the country notes for the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Papua New Guinea (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.7 - E/ICEF/1997/P/L.8) and discussed major trends and developments in the region.

37. A number of delegations expressed support for the proposed country programme strategy for the Lao People's Democratic Republic, stating that the strategy and objectives clearly reflected national priorities. Speakers noted the participation of both the Government and NGOs in the process. One delegation referred to the country's commitment to implementing both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, as reflected in the country note. Another delegation said that the strategy would contribute to sustainability of basic services through the involvement and active participation of communities. The importance of child protection issues was also emphasized.

38. The need for continued coordination among partners was cited, with a delegation stating that the proposed objective of continuing to develop new partnerships would support the Government's decentralization initiative. The issue of access to and the effectiveness of health services and the maintenance of health infrastructures was highlighted, as was the need for UNICEF to continue advocating the formulation and adoption of a national health policy. There should be follow up to and implementation of the recommendations of the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, not only in the country under discussion, but in all UNICEF-supported programmes of cooperation. The Regional Director agreed with the need for a national health policy and explained how strategies presently being implemented, specifically the expanded programme on immunization and strong collaboration with the Lao Women's Union, had shown good results. Continued cooperation with other partners, as exemplified by the Mekong HIV programme, illustrated the UNICEF approach to adolescent girls' health. The child protection situation along the country's border and child trafficking were other major concerns.

39. Several delegations expressed satisfaction that the country strategy for Papua New Guinea had been developed on the basis of national priorities that were in line with the goals of the World Summit for Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A speaker said that the country note did not seem to have clearly captured the good work that UNICEF was doing in the country. The country programme strategy should be addressed more directly, with well-defined approaches and concrete examples of how the programme strategies would be applied and how global initiatives would be adapted to the national context. It was important that UNICEF strengthen its collaboration with other donors, particularly in areas where it was not the lead donor.

40. The representative of Papua New Guinea pledged his Government's commitment to children and to continued collaboration with UNICEF. He expressed concern about the treatment of some issues in the country note, i.e., the prevalence of violence against women, poverty rather than a lack of technology and skills as a cause of children's problems, and government spending for social development. He cited his Government's initiatives, including ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and its encouragement of girl's education, women's employment and women's participation in national political life. He also appealed for strengthened coordination among United Nations agencies and with bilateral donors in providing assistance to the country.

41. The Regional Director said that at the strategy meeting held in September 1996, with the participation of the newly established National Planning Office, the Education Department and the Health Department, the issue of violence against women had been raised by both women's organization and the Government. She acknowledged the sensitivity of the issue and offered to share the latest situation analysis with the representative. She also underscored the commitment of UNICEF to collaboration with other United Nations agencies.

42. The Regional Director for South Asia introduced the country note for India (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.9) and provided an overview of the situation in the region.

43. The representative of India said that the new country programme would be harmonized with the country's next five-year plan. The key strategies proposed in the country note - development of human capacity and convergence of activities - reflected the country's ninth plan. The Integrated Child Development Service Programme had been instrumental in meeting several goals for children and women, including immunization, and now focused on goals related to feeding practices and micronutrients. The recent decision of India's Supreme Court banning child labour reflected the commitments of the Government and society. The need now was to create social awareness about the importance of sending children to school and for the Government and the community to ensure adequate opportunities for education. She stressed the importance of advocacy and awareness creation for behavioural change.

44. Several other delegations highlighted as positive the shift away from support to service delivery towards capacity-building and empowerment. Some delegations, however, said that strategies for dealing with the problems of children in especially difficult circumstances should be articulated more clearly. Several speakers welcomed the emphasis on women and girls and the priority to be accorded to the decentralization process and empowerment. One delegation said that the section on lessons learned was too brief and unrelated to the proposed strategy. Another speaker said that there was a lack of focus in the proposed strategies. The Regional Director said that some of the questions being raised would be more appropriate when reviewing the CPR itself in September 1997, rather than the proposed strategy. He agreed, however, that the country note did not adequately reflect the lessons learned, which was why he had mentioned some additional ones in his presentation.

45. Several delegations referred to the role of UNICEF compared to that of other donors and partners and requested closer coordination, particularly in programmes in which UNICEF was not the major player. They highlighted the need for closer coordination of activities with UNFPA, the World Bank and the Swedish International Development Authority in the area of reproductive health. One delegation asked if UNICEF should play a more catalytic role, while another asked how UNICEF was going to reach communities given India's vast and decentralized system. The Regional Director explained that it was not for UNICEF to reach communities directly, but to help government and decentralized structures reach communities, and to empower and build the capacity of organizations. He agreed that UNICEF should play a catalytic role and complement the actions of others. He also cited the close collaboration between UNICEF and UNAIDS.

46. Several delegations stated that the strategies for dealing with child labour were not specific and should be described more clearly within the country's broader socio-economic context. One delegation suggested that UNICEF could follow the example of other successful approaches such as the one being followed in Bangladesh. Several delegations questioned the consistency between UNICEF policy statements and programming, based on the review of various country notes. For example, the India country note mentioned child labour and child prostitution only once. The Executive Director explained that as the work of UNICEF was anchored in the country programme, priorities had to be determined at the country level. Global advocacy on such key issues as child labour did not require that all programmes deal with the issue in the same way.

47. Several delegations referred to the issue of reproductive and adolescent health. One speaker said that adolescent health required special attention from UNICEF in line with its mandate, yet the country note made no reference to this

subject. More effective coordination with other partners was needed, especially UNFPA. The Regional Director replied that there were many participants and UNICEF should focus on women in the most difficult of circumstances by giving top priority to reducing maternal mortality, instead of spreading its attention too broadly.

48. The Regional Director also responded to the suggestion regarding a UNICEF focus on the poorest regions, explaining that the issue had been carefully considered. The question was really whether UNICEF should focus on just the poorest regions or on the poorest groups in all regions, as there was poverty in all states. As for reaching the unreached, the challenge was to find ways to reach this target group.

49. Asked about the impact of the change in strategies on staffing and management in the country office, the Regional Director said it would be significant and that a priority task for the country office would be to prepare a suitable country programme management plan (CPMP). Another delegation said that the new strategies required that a number of new progress and process indicators be developed and requested that an oral report on the proposed monitoring and evaluation system accompany the presentation of the CPR in September.

50. One delegation stated that the lack of a sectoral budget presentation made it difficult to understand the relative programme priorities. Another delegation stated that the proposed level of supplementary funding was ambitious and requested information on the levels of contributions for the present country programme. The speaker also asked if UNICEF would undertake fund-raising within India itself. The Regional Director replied that the proposed level of supplementary funding was based on past experience and realistic estimates. UNICEF was discussing the topic of local fund-raising with the Government, but the amounts that could be raised within the country would be limited. External donors would remain the main source of supplementary funding. The representative of India added that discussions regarding in-country fund-raising by UNICEF were at an advanced stage and the Government's decision was expected soon. She stated, however, her Government's appreciation for donors' support to the country programme and conveyed the hope that donor support would continue as additional resources were still required to sustain progress.

The Americas and the Caribbean

51. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean introduced the country notes for Bolivia, Venezuela and the multi-country programme of the Eastern Caribbean (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.4 - E/ICEF/1997/P/L.6) and provided an overview of the situation in the region.

52. Many delegations congratulated the President of the Executive Board on her election and commended the Regional Director for UNICEF efforts in the region. One delegation praised the region for its initiatives with respect to "Voice of Children" activities and requested more detailed documentation on how children's voices can be better heard. Several delegations expressed concern about the widening gap between economic growth and social progress in the region, particularly with respect to the increased numbers of people living in poverty and high rates of violence. Delegations welcomed the references to increased collaboration with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and other organizations. One delegation mentioned the need for adjustment to be accompanied by increased inter-agency cooperation among donors.

53. Many delegations endorsed the country note for Bolivia as being precise and informative, with the situation analysis and lessons learned clearly

depicted. Others welcomed the child rights perspective, the well-balanced strategy and cross-sectoral approach. Several delegations encouraged further collaboration with NGOs, especially in the highlands, on basic services through capacity-building at all levels of Government. One speaker cited the link between objectives and the future strategy of the programme, but said that the comparative advantage of UNICEF needed to be articulated more clearly.

54. A number of delegations expressed satisfaction with the consultative process and encouraged continuous dialogue with donors, as well as increased dialogue with NGOs. Several speakers stressed the importance of a monitoring system and of social indicators to measure the impact of economic and social changes on the situation of children and women. One delegation sought clarification as to how UNICEF planned to monitor support to social policies developed at the national level in all 140 priority municipalities. The Regional Director said that monitoring and evaluation had been identified by the RMT as the main priority for the coming year and that issues such as methodology, the development of indicators and training of personnel would be addressed.

55. A number of delegations stressed the importance of coordination, collaboration and policy dialogue between central and local government to achieve long-term sustainability and national ownership. One speaker sought clarification on how UNICEF planned to strengthen policy development at all levels of Government, and another requested detailed information on the strategies to be used.

56. Clarification was requested on specific efforts for vulnerable groups in reference to paragraphs 12-14 of the country note. The same delegation requested more detailed information with respect to children in especially difficult circumstances, including street children and child labour. Additional information was requested on the extent of UNICEF support to reproductive health in the two cross-sectoral programmes. Several delegations stressed that high priority should be given to education, including efforts to increase school attendance. One delegation stated that the European Union would finance a food security programme and asked how UNICEF would coordinate with other United Nation agencies on this initiative.

57. Several delegations cited an uneven balance between general resources and supplementary funding and said that the issues of sustainability and feasibility needed to be addressed. One speaker said that the levels of supplementary funding were overly optimistic. Clarification was requested on how supplementary funds would be obtained, and additional information was sought regarding the programme planning process. One delegation cautioned against aid dependency and suggested that long-term planning anticipate the phasing-out of donor support. The Regional Director said that in recent years, the level of supplementary funds contributions for Bolivia had been relatively high, in addition to funds from the Andean and Amazon subregional programmes. She acknowledge that supplementary funds contributions were expected to decline. The country office would work to mobilize funds through the private sector, fund-raising events and international development banks.

58. Regarding its own country note, the delegation of Venezuela thanked UNICEF for providing technical assistance to improve the situation of children and women. Additional efforts would be taken to raise local funds, especially from the private sector. Another delegation noted the alarming situation with respect to violence, especially in cities, and, in reference to paragraphs 7-13, stressed the importance of advocacy and the need for government policy to emphasize capacity-building. Several delegations stressed that education and health should be high priority areas.

59. Delegations expressed satisfaction with the multi-country programme for the Eastern Caribbean, saying that the diverse nature of the many different countries had been accurately reflected and addressed. One speaker commended the reference to regional and subregional initiatives and encouraged further collaboration. Another delegation requested further clarification on the impact of the emergency in Montserrat on the programme strategy. The same delegation noted that the new country programme had been expanded to include 13 territories, and expressed concern about resources being too limited for such broad coverage.

60. The Regional Director said that suggestions on specific programme activities would be considered in the preparation of the CPRs.

Europe

61. The Regional Director for Europe provided a brief overview of the situation in the region. He specifically referred to the responsibility of the regional office for providing overall policy guidance, advising and managing the planning processes and monitoring quality assurance with the 38 National Committees for UNICEF. Implementing the mechanisms to improve partnerships with the National Committees would be the highest priority of the office in 1997.

Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

62. The Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States provided an overview of the situation in the region.

63. Referring to a comment by the Regional Director on the scarcity of resources, one delegate requested information as to whether there were problems related to establishing contact or cooperating with intergovernmental organizations and specialized and affiliate agencies, and invited suggestions for alleviating problems of coordination with such organizations. The Regional Director said that he was unaware of any problems and that there was openness, willingness and effectiveness in inter-agency collaboration in each country, partly because no one international organization had sufficient human and financial resources to respond to the requirements in each country.

64. Referring to the report on the UNICEF approach to the region (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.61) that was considered by the Executive Board in 1996, a speaker said that the regional office took into account the varying situations in the region through three basic approaches - 16 country programmes, selected educational activities in non-programme countries and humanitarian assistance in emergency situations. He endorsed UNICEF cooperation with Governments and other partners which helped to sustain social achievements in the region while at the same time reforming national institutions to protect children and mothers in accordance with changing conditions in countries. UNICEF support was needed to promote national policies to better serve the interest of children and mothers, to ensure that there were properly functioning social services for adolescents and women and to help civil society, state and public institutions to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The speaker encouraged the regional office to explore innovative ways to raise additional resources for country activities in addition to the general resources available.

65. Another speaker cited the important role of UNICEF in the region given problems such as economic crisis and conflict. Each country programme should take into account key factors such as the number of refugees, decline in gross national product or positive developments. The speaker cited the emergency

programme of assistance in his country which targeted refugees and displaced persons, combated communicable illnesses and provided social rehabilitation through children's centres in refugee camps. Owing to UNICEF support, polio and diphtheria had been reduced significantly. He said his country's long-term programme of development to reform the health and education systems would increase national capacity.

66. Referring to the critical situation of children, adolescents, families and women facing the States of the former Soviet Union, one speaker said that the regional office's constructive work could help countries to organize activities to protect the rights and interests of children and women. Despite the efforts of Governments to improve the status of women, additional supplementary funds were needed for UNICEF-assisted programmes. In addition, new programmes should be designed to alleviate the problems facing the region.

67. Another delegation urged the international community to alleviate the situation in Azerbaijan. The speaker referred to a conference being organized in September 1997 by the International Paediatric Association (IPA), in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO, on the urgent needs of children and measures that could be taken to improve their situation. The same speaker also referred to a horrifying situation witnessed by an IPA team in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A report had been sent to the Executive Director containing proposals to improve the health situation with the help of paediatricians from other countries. He appealed for supplementary funds to alleviate the problem.

B. Implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF

68. The Executive Board had before it a report on the implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF (E/ICEF/1997/3), which was introduced by the Director of the Health Section. The Director of the WHO Division of Family Health also addressed the Board.

69. Delegations congratulated the secretariat for the report and its presentation. They welcomed the programming and implementation principles highlighted in the implementation plan and its development within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. More particularly, they encouraged greater gender sensitivity in UNICEF programming and stressed the necessity to promote men and boys' involvement in issues concerning families, children and women.

70. Speakers welcomed the emphasis put on strengthening and developing partnerships, promoting intersectoral and integrated approaches and building local capacity. They said that this strategy was conducive to longer-term programme sustainability and was crucial to achievement of the goals for the year 2000, to which UNICEF should remain fully committed. Those goals, together with programmes aimed at improving the health of children and women, should receive high priority. Speakers also supported the development of approaches addressing the very specific needs of young people.

71. Many speakers commended UNICEF efforts to strengthen inter-agency cooperation, with full respect for the mandate of UNICEF and its policies and approaches aimed at promoting equity. They particularly welcomed improved cooperation between UNICEF and WHO, especially in areas such as child health, immunization, maternal mortality reduction and young people's health.

72. They strongly encouraged UNICEF to accelerate the exchange of information and experience between UNICEF-supported countries and supported the establishment of a typology of countries to promote replication of best practices among countries sharing similar development patterns in different

regions. They also supported the reinforced role of UNICEF, national Governments and partners at the regional level in the country programming process and in the regional adaptation of the health strategy. They encouraged UNICEF to further develop its actions in the field of monitoring for health

73. It was recommended that priorities be set in implementing the health strategy, and UNICEF was urged mobilize human and financial resources, as well as its partners. Delegations expressed a strong interest in the implementation of the plan over the next year and requested periodic progress reports. (See the annex, decision 1997/9, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

C. Operational paper on selected issues relating to UNICEF emergency interventions

74. This agenda item was discussed in conjunction with the agenda item on follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 and 1996/33 on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (see paras. 75-89 below).

D. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 and 1996/33 on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

75. The Executive Board had before it two reports: "Children and women in emergencies: strategic priorities and operational concerns for UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1997/7) and "Progress report on follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 and 1996/33: strengthening coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (E/ICEF/1997/5). The Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes introduced the two reports, which were considered by the Board during a single discussion, and also reported on recent UNICEF activities in the Great Lakes region of Africa. The Director of the New York office of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General also addressed the Executive Board.

76. A majority of delegations commended the efforts of UNICEF in addressing the needs of women and children in emergencies. Some speakers commended the organization's overall provision of humanitarian assistance, including its readiness, provision of equipment, rapid response training and updated catalogue of goods and maintenance of the Copenhagen warehouse. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the consultative process used in preparing the report on strategic priorities and said that both reports helped to clarify a number of issues previously raised by the Board. A number of speakers agreed with the situation-specific emergency response of UNICEF that was focused on the family and had a development orientation and a broad and integrated approach.

77. Several delegations said that priority areas for UNICEF should continue to be long-term, sustainable development that emphasized local capacity-building and self-reliance. Another delegation said that an overemphasis on development could impact badly on immediate needs and that UNICEF should pursue a balanced strategy. Some delegations expressed concern that "loud" emergencies such as armed conflicts drew the immediate concern of the international community, while "silent" emergencies such as poverty and famine, which claimed more victims each year and were often the root causes of loud emergencies, were forgotten. A speaker suggested that silent emergencies be incorporated within the regular emergency programming process. A delegation said that it was important to distinguish between the proximity and root causes of conflicts and what UNICEF hoped to achieve in each situation. Two delegations mentioned the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, which they said had affected the lives of 500,000 children.

78. Most delegations raised the issue of coordination, with many supporting UNICEF efforts to ensure coordination with other agencies and partners as a reliable basis for subsequent activities. The importance of strengthened coordination with DHA was cited by a number of speakers. One speaker asked if any arrangements had been made for UNICEF field representatives to provide direct input to DHA so that appropriate and timely action could be taken. Another speaker said that examples of the intensive cooperation between UNICEF and NGOs had been omitted from the report. A delegation said that intraregional cooperation should be organized and utilized towards supporting humanitarian assistance.

79. Many speakers supported the signing of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with various United Nations agencies, specifically with regard to the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Some speakers said that there should be coordination of the growing number of bilateral MOUs and suggested that the Economic and Social Council could have a role in comparing them. The Director said that UNICEF would continue to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Centre for Human Rights and develop MOUs with them based on a common position on children. It was suggested that UNICEF use the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) mechanism and assist in strengthening the role of DHA. Another speaker stated that there was a need to prioritize the work of IASC and that its reporting should be undertaken in a timely manner. UNICEF was asked to elaborate its specific roles and responsibilities in inter-agency coordination. It was stated that all agencies should have clear and defined roles and duties at global and country levels to ensure effective coordination and avoid duplication. A number of delegations said that UNICEF should continue to second staff to DHA. A speaker asked about examples of coordination and partnership mentioned in recent appeals. Other speakers asked in what context UNICEF saw its role in coordinating its actions with those of peace-keeping forces.

80. Many delegations raised the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs), including whether UNICEF had examined the comparative advantage of UNHCR in dealing with refugees and IDPs. Several speakers said that UNICEF should focus on internally displaced children, and that the report should have made a clear distinction between internally displaced persons and children. Delegations asked about the criteria used to designate the lead agency for IDPs. One speaker said that both UNDP and UNICEF had provided assistance to IDPs in his country and recommended that the two agencies cooperate with DHA to offer programming guidelines on requirements for IDPs. The Director said that inter-agency discussions on IDPs were currently taking place, and that UNICEF would continue to focus on internally displaced children. UNICEF would give priority to coordination with DHA, the World Food Programme, WHO, the International Committee of the Red Cross and international and local NGOs, which had drawn up a compendium of services for IDPs.

81. Several speakers addressed the issue of protection as discussed in the report, with some stressing that it should not be seen in a political context. Other speakers said that further scrutiny of the issue was needed and questioned whether UNICEF had a comparative advantage in this area, given that UNHCR, with its specific protection mandate and protection officers, appeared to be better suited to this issue. A delegation agreed with UNICEF that no individual agency or organization could act independently for the protection of children. Other speakers asked if UNICEF had set any criteria for staff programming on the issue of protecting children's and women's rights, if UNICEF had worked towards the reconstruction of the legal system and if it hoped to develop a rule of law on protection. The Director said that UNICEF had some competence in the area of child justice, for example in Rwanda, where it had supported the Department of Juvenile Justice and had separated juvenile detainees from adult prisoners.

82. A speaker said that further elaboration was needed of the difference between legal and operational mandates, and between protection against hunger and protection against physical abuse. It was also said that this was an evolving issue and UNICEF should to continue to develop a strategy. The Director said that the UNICEF focus on protection was in consonance with a rights-based approach. UNICEF would not deal with legal protection as did UNHCR, but would focus on negotiations (under the DHA banner) to ensure that children had access to humanitarian aid and that unaccompanied, traumatized, recruited and abused children - all of whom were part of the UNICEF mandate - received adequate and coordinated assistance.

83. A number of delegations said that the report had taken into account the comparative advantage of UNICEF. A speaker said that in formulating that comparative advantage, a range of objectives had been suggested, but there appeared to be no room for complementarity of actions by different partners. A delegation asked what UNICEF would and would not undertake given its limited resources. The Director stated that UNICEF advocated on behalf of children to ensure that their needs and rights were protected. UNICEF did not act alone, but always in conjunction with its partners. For example, UNICEF did not vaccinate or feed others directly, but helped local and national partners to do so. Another speaker said that UNICEF should continuously update its emergency resources, personnel and proven tactics. One speaker said that because emergency activities could not be operated using a blue print, field officers should be given ample flexibility to carry out their tasks. Several delegations asked how UNICEF ensured strategic communications with its field staff.

84. A delegation said that UNICEF should strengthen its emergency preparedness at all levels and asked if UNICEF would use its regional structures for preparedness planning and reviewing and updating data. Two delegations said that monitoring and evaluation efforts had fallen short and that UNICEF should set priorities and maintain predictability, accountability and evaluate emergency interventions. One speaker said that a thorough evaluation during and after crises would allow a better response capacity. The Director agreed about the importance to UNICEF of improving monitoring and evaluation both internally and in the inter-agency system. UNICEF had assessed lessons learned and in February 1997 would participate in the final review of the Rwanda experience.

85. Many delegations addressed funding issues, particularly the consolidated inter-agency appeals process (CAP). Some speakers said that CAP should be streamlined and others commended the strengthening of CAP to respond to emergencies, but said that this should be fully reflected in the field. A speaker asked how quickly headquarters could approve the reprogramming of funds and asked for examples of the reprogramming process. It was also asked if these transfers were considered temporary and if there were any other applicable funding mechanisms. The Director said that the transfer of funds to emergency activities was under the purview of UNICEF representatives. Many delegations expressed concern about the decline in contributions to CAP, and one suggested that some innovative funding mechanisms could be developed through Governments, communities and businesses. A delegation stressed the importance of the funding mechanism and of setting clear priorities in an appeal. Another speaker said that funding for emergencies should continue to be through supplementary sources. The Director said that the extended CAP (ECAP) currently provided two windows to address relief and rehabilitative activities. There was still some debate as to how ECAP would be managed in the field and this related to discussions centred around the round-table resource exercises, the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions and interventions by the World Bank.

86. Some delegations asked about the human resources needed for emergency operating procedures and the devolution of operational decision-making. A speaker said that the advocacy role of UNICEF was vital to resource mobilization. Other delegations asked how UNICEF would view the Central Emergency Revolving Fund in the future given the anticipated lesser demand. Some delegations asked if it was reasonable to assume that over time, UNICEF expenditure on emergency programmes would average 15-20 per cent of total annual programme expenditure. The Director said that the figures of 15-29 per cent cited in the report were only a range and that much depended on the international climate and the effectiveness of UNICEF. A delegation asked that the secretariat explore and report back to the Board on the relative cost of services performed by UNICEF in comparison to those of NGOs.

87. Several delegations supported UNICEF actions with regard to anti-personnel mines. A delegation said that there had been no mention in the report of the negative impact of sanctions on children, especially in Iraq. The Director said that UNICEF worked under the DHA umbrella to assess the impact of sanctions on children. One delegation expressed support for UNICEF work on the physical and psycho-social recovery and social reintegration of child victims and its work to help traumatized women in Rwanda. A number of delegations asked about short-term food management.

88. A number of delegations stressed the importance of focusing on education in emergency situations. A speaker said that donors did not respond adequately in the fields of education and health and suggested that joint inter-agency projects be funded through appeals.

89. See the annex, decisions 1997/1 and 1997/7, for the text of the decisions adopted by the Executive Board.

E. Follow-up to relevant decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council

90. The Executive Board had before it a report on follow-up to relevant decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council (E/ICEF/1997/4), which was introduced by the Director for United Nations Affairs and External Relations. The Director also reported to the Board on decisions taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session that were of relevance to UNICEF.

91. Delegations emphasized several aspects of follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/120 of 20 December 1995 that would require careful monitoring, including harmonization of programme cycles, the inter-agency task force following up recent international conferences, support for the resident coordinator system, the CSN, harmonization of procedures and common country assessments. Note was made, in particular, of progress on the harmonization of budgets and the useful precedent this provided for other areas.

92. Many delegations emphasized the importance of closer collaboration with the World Bank, including UNICEF participation in preparation of the country assessment strategy and in sectoral investment programmes, as well as in programme collaboration, capacity-building and human resource development, information exchange and policy studies. The need for closer collaboration with other members of the United Nations family was also stressed, particularly with the International Labour Organisation in the area of child labour, as well as the need for countries to assume full ownership of programmes.

93. Several delegations requested additional informal briefings and consultations, mentioning several specific topics, including lessons learned in working with the World Bank, strategies for the protection of children in need of special protection, and evaluations.

94. In response to questions concerning the harmonization of programming cycles, the Director stated that because of the target date of 1999, a number of bridging arrangements had to be established. However, approximately 90 per cent would be harmonized in the next programming cycle, leaving a small number which for various reasons could not be harmonized. Future harmonization would ensure that country programmes were considered at the same time, both in the field and by the respective Executive Boards.

95. UNICEF welcomed the suggestion that an informal briefing with the World Bank be convened, and agreed to do so either during an Executive Board session or at an inter-sessional meeting. Regarding comments concerning social concerns and the Bank, the Director said that closer collaboration was being actively pursued. Collaboration has been good to date, but was driven largely by personal relations among the actors in the field. Both sides were aware that collaborative arrangements should be institutionalized to a greater degree. The Bank was in favour of strengthened ties with the United Nations system, but its Board of Directors set a precedent of treating the United Nations system like any consultant or executing agency. Any support that the Executive Board could provide with the Bank's Directors in support of a special relationship for UNICEF and the United Nations system would be appreciated. In terms of priority areas of partnership, sectoral investment programmes had the greatest potential.

96. In response to a question regarding the response to a letter to the Executive Director from the Administrator of UNDP asking for support to the Office of United Nations System Support and Services, the Director said that the recently adopted budget contained a D-2 post intended for secondment to the Office. At field level, UNICEF had provided staff secondments for resident coordinator posts and has taken the lead in thematic groups, among other activities.

F. Follow-up to the audit of the Kenya country office

97. The Executive Board had before it a report on follow-up to the audit of the Kenya country office (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.2). The Director of the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) updated the report with details of further encouraging progress made since the report had been prepared. As of 17 January 1997, 64 of the 67 audit recommendations had been implemented, with only three outstanding. The outstanding recommendations were in large measure outside the control of UNICEF. The Executive Director welcomed the support of the Government of Kenya in prosecuting the 23 staff members who had been dismissed and said that all the cases would be going to trial shortly.

98. The Director said that significant recoveries had been made from suppliers and others. He referred to the existence of a strong internal control framework in the Kenya country office, although the controls had not yet been fully tested because the current UNICEF programme did not at present involve a sufficient volume of transactions. The OIA would return to the Kenya country office towards the end of 1997 to verify that the controls were operating in practice, by which time the volume of transactions would have increased.

99. Several delegations said that since most of the audit recommendations had been implemented, the Kenya country office should now concentrate on the delivery of a more focused programme with a view to achieving programme objectives before the end of the programme cycle in 1998.

100. Another delegation welcomed the transparent way in which UNICEF had handled this case with regular reports to the Executive Board and said that a regular report to the Board was no longer required, but that a final report should be provided at the appropriate time with details of the measures taken

and the results achieved. The Executive Director agreed to provide such a report. In conclusion she commented that an important lesson learned from this case was that UNICEF must have good operations in order to operate good programmes. (See the annex, decision 1997/2, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

G. Management Excellence Programme

101. The Executive Board had before it a progress report on MEP (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.1), which was introduced by the Executive Director. She said that the report should be reviewed in conjunction with the revised integrated budget for the biennium 1996-1997 for headquarters and regional offices (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.5), which described the budgetary implications of organizational changes to date (see paras. 135-142 below).

102. The Executive Director discussed developments that had occurred since the submission of the report. The external study of the Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO) had produced a useful set of recommendations for GCO to re-establish growth and become a more effective commercial organization, thus securing longer-term fund-raising capabilities for UNICEF. The study had been completed in December 1996, and tangible results were already visible. GCO had begun to reduce dramatically its product line development cycle and target a more youthful consumer interested in buying greeting cards year round. In February-March 1997, the new line would be launched in France and Germany.

103. Other progress included the completion of their projects by the working groups on strengthening the country programme process and clarifying roles for country, regional and headquarters offices, and on the reorganization of the Geneva office as the focal point for managing relations with National Committees. Management excellence initiatives in country offices included the development of country management teams and participatory management skills. In 1996, 50 training workshops had been conducted at headquarters and in country offices to strengthen capacities for work process redesign and management, foster teamwork and improve interpersonal communication skills. All new representatives had received a two-week, management-focused orientation, including help to prepare countries to initiate PROMS.

104. The current priority of the Global Management Team (GMT) was to strengthen human resources management throughout the organization and to give the Division of Human Resources a more strategic function focused on meeting the organization's present and future needs, adding value to UNICEF country programmes, building capacities for management of human resources and providing quality service to staff.

105. Several delegations thanked the secretariat for the concrete results achieved to date and expressed appreciation for the substantive information provided in the report, specifically the table comparing the recommendations of the original Booz•Allen & Hamilton recommendations with action taken. A number of speakers requested that the table include information on improved effectiveness. Several delegations said that the secretariat's reform efforts helped to improve not only UNICEF, but the entire United Nations system.

106. Improvements in the financial management and information technology systems were highlighted as significant advances by delegations. However, a speaker said that the report did not provide information on the cost of the new financial system or on options for alternative systems. A few delegations suggested that priorities on the appropriate use of information technology be guided by benefits for children. The Executive Director stated that UNICEF was prepared to let others work out some of the difficulties associated with new

information technologies. An internal governance system had been established to identify priority information technology activities best suited to the needs and strategies of UNICEF. A speaker expressed appreciation for the increased use of e-mail and resulting decrease in telephone charges at headquarters.

107. Several speakers welcomed the closer cooperation between the supply and programme functions, with Supply Division becoming more responsive to the needs of country programmes. A delegation requested more information on the accountabilities and reporting lines of staff working in supply functions to ensure strict respect of rules and standards. Another questioned whether further decentralization of the supply function would lead to the exclusion of competitive bidding processes. The Executive Director said that it was important to strengthen the capacities of staff working in supply functions, to develop control systems and to engage the most competitive markets.

108. Many delegations welcomed the tangible results achieved to date in strengthening the country programme process through clarified roles of country, regional and headquarters offices. Some speakers requested further discussion at the next session of how duties are shared between the different offices. A speaker also expressed appreciation for the reduced number of headquarters divisions. Recalling Executive Board decision 1996/32 (E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1), which endorsed the incremental approach adopted by the secretariat to implement MEP, a delegation said that the regional directors' presentations of the country notes and their regional overviews had shown the added value of regional support to the country programming process. The speaker encouraged the secretariat to continue its efforts to strengthen the country programme process as an integral part of an integrated system of change that also includes the development of systems for finance and supply functions, improved information technologies and management information, including PROMS.

109. Several speakers expressed appreciation for informal briefings organized during the session on the CPMP and the development of PROMS, both of which had great potential for improving the efficiency of country programmes. Several speakers said that the object of reform was to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of UNICEF country programmes. One speaker said that in doing so, the role of the regional office in monitoring the work of country offices should be strengthened. The Executive Director said that there had been increased collaboration between country and regional offices to strengthen strategic analysis, planning and monitoring at the country level.

110. A delegation spoke in favour of the steps taken to strengthen the country programme process by redefining the role of the geographic sections at headquarters. The Executive Director said that the report of the working group on the geographic sections would be shared with the Board when it was available. She said that the geographic sections would continue to play a critical role at headquarters, especially in providing analysis on regional issues. It was suggested that the organization's future structure continue to be flexible. Another speaker welcomed closer cooperation with Governments in relation to the restructuring of country offices.

111. With regard to human resources issues, several speakers supported the work of the GMT on this issue. The need for increased attention to training was stressed. Speakers requested the secretariat to share information on obstacle encountered in relation to the United Nations common system and to improving performance assessment and performance management. The Executive Director said that career management was an important area for the entire United Nations system. Performance should be the basis for career development, and staff should have a greater range of experience both at headquarters and in the field. Training alone would not solve all problems.

112. A speaker asked that the President of the Global Staff Association brief the Executive Board on how human resources improvements were affecting staff and overall staff morale. The Executive Director stressed her commitment to improving staff morale, yet reminded members of the Board that organizational change created anxiety among staff. The increased use of teams had helped to improve staff participation and morale. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the creation of management teams as a new internal governance system and specifically requested information of the work of the RMTs.

113. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF said that the National Committees had participated fully in the working group that had developed proposals on the reorganization of the Geneva office. The Committees had also been involved in the Coopers & Lybrand study on GCO. The conclusions of both exercises have been shared with all National Committees. The process of implementing recommendations would begin during the annual meeting of National Committees in May 1997. Two areas for improvement would be to aim for a better yield from operations by National Committees to increase contributions to UNICEF; and improvement of the overall functioning of the Committees, including in industrialized countries, to promote the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The Executive Director stressed the importance of all National Committees regardless of size or revenues generated.

114. The Executive Director said that the secretariat would indicate future accomplishments to the Board as they were achieved, including gains in efficiency. However, not every activity would have a bottom line in terms of savings. Investments might be required in areas such as the new financial system. The secretariat would continue to act in a timely manner regarding the presentation of budgets, in harmonization with other United Nations agencies, so that changes could take place promptly rather than deferring to later budget exercises.

H. Harmonization of presentation of budgets: United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF

115. The Executive Board considered the following documents:

(a) Harmonization of budgets: UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.3 and Add.1);

(b) Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the harmonization of budgets: UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.6).

116. The Comptroller and Director of the Division of Finance and Administrative Management said that the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board had approved the proposed formats during its session the preceding week. The harmonization project had begun in 1994 with decisions taken by the respective Executive Boards requesting the heads of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA to work towards harmonizing their presentation of budgets with a view to achieving common definitions, particularly of administrative costs, and obtaining a higher degree of financial transparency and comparability. Progress reports and working papers had been submitted to the Executive Boards during 1995 and 1996. An oral progress report was made to the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session of 1996. In addition, there had been joint inter-sessional meetings of the UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF Executive Boards.

117. The various exchanges had provided important guiding principles which had influenced the direction of the project, primarily a comprehensive statement by one delegation and endorsed by other delegations to both Executive Boards. The intervention set forth the basic purpose of harmonization and identified the principles on which harmonization should be based. It stated that harmonization meant making the budget presentations more similar in order to promote understanding and support good decision-making, and that similarity should go beyond content and presentation styles. Harmonization should encompass the underlying principles that are employed in the preparation of budgets and that it would mean similarity, not sameness.

118. A second principle expressed by Board members during informal briefings had been that analysis and information should support strategic policy development and decision-making by the Boards, rather than involving the Boards in too many budgetary details. The latter, it was generally felt, was the overall management responsibility of the executive heads of the organizations.

119. The proposals covered:

(a) A common format for presentation of the biennial support budgets;

(b) Related common terms and definitions;

(c) A common methodology for the preparation of the budget estimates.

120. The Comptroller expressed appreciation for the positive feedback from Executive Board members. The successful outcome of the harmonization exercise was equally to the credit of the constructive support and cooperation from the Board and the Advisory Committee.

121. Delegations welcomed and congratulated the organizations on arriving at the proposals on the harmonization of budgets, which they said would contribute to a comprehensive and transparent budget presentation. One delegation said that the process had been as valuable as the product itself. A speaker particularly welcomed the inclusion of the distinction between real growth and cost increases in the budget tables.

122. Several delegations described the harmonization as an achievement that would benefit other parts of the United Nations system, and as a basis for other parts of the system to advance along the same lines. The demonstration of transparent financial management would encourage increased contributions to the agencies. The budgets would now be presented in a simpler, clearer and more comparable manner, making it easier to compare the activities of the various organizations. The agencies were engaged in different activities and there could not be complete harmonization because the agencies were different from each other. Therefore, agencies should focus and develop their own specific characteristics and comparative advantages. The harmonization exercise should not be an end in itself, but instead should lead to financial reporting on results and the use of resources against results. Some delegations asked UNICEF to provide more information on the effectiveness of and costs associated with regional offices.

123. A delegation proposed that a further breakdown of income in the resource plan be provided, although if the information were available elsewhere in the document, the change need not be made. The speaker requested that information on the number of staff and the cost of staff charged to programmes be included in tables 2 and 3. The speaker concurred with the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that greater efforts be made by the three secretariats to refine the methodology for classifying programmes and support expenditure. The Comptroller said that the information requested could be found in table 4 of each CPR.

124. Another delegation expressed some reservations regarding definitions and terminology. While agreeing that a classification based on organizational units was the most practical one, it was not the most logical. As an example, the definition of programme support included programme delivery, which the speaker said should be part of programmes. The delegation could accept the definitions provided by the organizations, but clarifications should be provided in the text when the budgets were presented, covering precise descriptions of the activities and outputs, objectives and targets, for purposes of monitoring performance. The speaker requested more clarification on the subdivision of the programme support component. The delegation also stressed the need for the organizations to continue the harmonization process, including work on common key indicators for measuring performance, such as regular budget compared to extrabudgetary funds, proportion of administrative budgets derived from various components, Professional to non-Professional staff and programme funds per position.

125. Two delegations supported the idea that the subdivision of regional offices, country offices and headquarters be reflected in the appropriation structure. Another speaker said that if the three-layer organization of regional offices, country offices and headquarters was to be made permanent in UNICEF, it should be reflected in the appropriation structure. The Comptroller requested that the delegations provide this request in writing so that it could be discussed with the harmonization working group. If UNICEF followed this breakdown, it would not be harmonized with the other agencies.

126. The Comptroller stated that the work on harmonization would continue. More experience would be gained as the organizations prepared their biennial support budgets for 1998-1999 using the new format. In preparing the budget, footnotes and detailed explanation would be provided to make the presentation as clear and transparent as possible. The organizations would consider all suggestions and discuss their applicability to all three agencies. She suggested that no changes be made until after the preparation of the 1998-1999 biennial budget. Any changes would have to be made in consultation with all agencies. (See the annex, decision 1997/5, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

I. Proposal on integrated budgeting in UNICEF

127. The Executive Board considered the following documents:

(a) Integrated budgeting in UNICEF (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.4);

(b) Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on integrated budgeting in UNICEF (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.7).

128. Ms. Karin Sham Poo, Deputy Executive Director, provided a brief introduction on the planning, cost structure and approval process for integrated budgeting in UNICEF in accordance with paragraph 8 of decision 1996/10. In August 1995, the concept of one budget for each country programme cycle and the submission of the budget with the CPR was first introduced during an informal consultation between the Executive Board and the secretariat consultation on integrated budgeting. This concept, however, was modified as a result of the discussions on the harmonization of budget presentations among UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA. The biennial support budget of the entire organization would be submitted to the Board for approval every two years, and the CPR would include the support budget together with the programme budget for the full programme cycle. The programme budget would be subject to Board approval, and the support budget in the CPR would be presented for information only.

129. The Deputy Executive Director said that the benefits of the proposed integrated budget would be: (a) a reflection of programme activity as the core of UNICEF work and the primary driver of expenditure; (b) a process which enables a systematic review of the relationship between the programme and the support budget required throughout the country programme cycle; (c) a complete picture of resources spent in one country; (d) a biennial support budget preparation process that would link headquarters and regional office activities to the requirements of the country programmes and ensure that the budgets were within the financial framework; and (e) a biennial support budget that would follow the format agreed to in the harmonization exercise with UNDP and UNFPA.

130. Because of the proposed change in the budgeting process, the Executive Board was requested to review the biennial support budget for 1998-1999 during the first regular session of 1998 instead of at the third regular session of 1997. The strategic framework for the integrated budget called for the development of a country office plan for the support budget that contributed to the effective and efficient implementation of the country programme. Thus, in order for the biennial support budget to be formulated, the CPR should be substantially completed. The submission of the budget to the third regular session of 1997 would require the scheduling of the Advisory Committee's review in May, prior to the completion of the CPR process in June. The secretariat would review future scheduling in consultation with the Executive Board and submit a proposal in 1998.

131. Delegations expressed appreciation for the report, agreeing that the integrated budget would provide a complete picture of resource allocations for every country and improve accountability and transparency. It was said that integrated budgeting would provide the linkage between operational and programme costs, leading to "budgeting for results" and results-based management. A delegation said that the integrating budgeting proposal addressed the recommendations of Booz•Allen and Hamilton as well as concerns previously expressed by the Executive Board and the Advisory Committee. The speaker supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that the biennial support budget include an addendum summarizing the support budgets and the country programme estimates. The Deputy Executive Director said that the integrated budgeting process had been tested in several countries last year and would again be used during 1997 budget reviews.

132. Most delegations supported the one-time proposal to submit the 1998-1999 biennial support budget to the Board at the first regular session in 1998. Some delegations emphasized that this approval would happen only once, and it was suggested that the secretariat review the scheduling problem. The Deputy Executive Director said that the budget review experience in 1997 would provide the basis for the scheduling proposal to be made in 1998. Both the schedule of the Advisory Committee and the impossibility of holding Executive Board sessions later than mid-September because of General Assembly sessions would have to be considered. One delegation asked about the possible effect of the timing of the United Nations Pledging Conference on the scheduling of budget submissions. The Deputy Executive Director said that there was no major link between the two.

133. The question of budget appropriations for the first few weeks in 1998, prior to the Board's approval of the budget at the first regular session, was raised by some delegations. A delegation suggested that an appropriation based on the actual year's expenditures be provided for the initial month. The Deputy Executive Director stated that a request for a one-month appropriation for January 1998 would be submitted to the Executive Board during the third regular session in 1997. The partial appropriation would not include any proposed changes that might be contained in the 1998-1999 budget, and the interim appropriation would be absorbed in the 1998-1999 biennial support budget.

134. A delegation requested that the implications of an external evaluation of the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean (SAFLAC) be considered in the preparation of the 1998-1999 biennial support budget. The Deputy Executive Director said that a review of SAFLAC would be reflected in the 1998-1999 programme budget. (See the annex, decision 1997/3, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

J. Revised budget for 1996-1997

135. The Executive Board considered the following documents:

(a) Revised integrated budget for the biennium 1996-1997 for headquarters and regional offices (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.5);

(b) Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the revised integrated budget for the biennium 1996-1997 for headquarters and regional offices (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.7).

136. Ms. Karin Sham Poo, Deputy Executive Director, introduced the document, saying that in April 1996, the Executive Board had approved a $346 million integrated budget for 1996-1997 for headquarters and regional offices, with the provision that the secretariat would come back to the Board with revisions to the budget resulting from MEP. The revised budget included proposals for the creation of the Division of Communications, the implementation of the new financial system within the costs of the existing budget and the reduction of the number of headquarters divisions from 18 to 15. The budget included further reductions in the number of headquarters posts from 27 in the approved budget to 36 and additional savings of $1.1 million in staff costs, for a total savings of $13.9 million in 1996-1997. The average grade level for international Professionals had been reduced from 4.25 in the approved budget to 4.19. The only authorization being requested at this session was to transfer the amount of $1.415 million from the GCO budget to cover the costs of personnel and activities transferred from GCO to the headquarters and regional offices budget.

137. The revised budget represented the concrete results of MEP, she said. Financing the new financial system through savings at headquarters and regional offices, to strengthen systems that will benefit the field, signified the organization's commitment to field-based activities.

138. Most delegations supported the transfer of funds from the GCO to the headquarters and regional office budget. One speaker, while expressing appreciation for the savings generated by the decrease in the number of divisions, said that some functions needed to be strengthened, including personnel, training and audit. Current training capacities could not respond to the enormous needs of the organization and OIA needed strengthening. The Deputy Executive Director said that under the approved 1996-1997 integrated budget for headquarters and regional offices, only OIA had seen its number of posts increase, indicating the intention to strengthen the audit function. UNICEF would review the results of this change and decide if any further strengthening was required. The Executive Director added that strengthening human resources management did not always mean an increase in staff resources, but rather more effective and efficient use of human resources. The GMT would be addressing human resources issues at its next meeting.

139. Some delegations said that the choice of a financial system for UNICEF should be the Executive Director's decision and that the Board should avoid micromanagement. One speaker said that if UNICEF did not select the United Nations Integrated Management Information System (UNIMIS), there should be ample coordination with other agencies to ensure compatibilities with other systems.

The speaker also asked that the secretariat take note of General Assembly resolution 50/120 of 20 December 1995 concerning the harmonization of funds and programmes.

140. A delegation made reference to comments by the Advisory Committee on the choice of technology for the new financial system, particularly with regard to the achievement of economies of scale in the development and maintenance of financial information systems that adhered to common standards. Harmonization of budgets should also mean harmonization of systems. If UNICEF was allowed to develop its own independent system, it would send the wrong signals to other agencies.

141. The Comptroller said that the choice of a new financial system was extremely complex and was the type of decision that was made once every 10-15 years by an organization. It was complex because of the far-reaching implications of the decision, in terms of financial and human resources to implement and maintain the system, and the organization's ability to change as times changed. The process of defining and evaluating potential solutions had been long, thorough and arduous and had lasted for almost a year. The decision should meet all of the needs of UNICEF in the most cost-effective and timely manner. Those needs should include the unique and commercial requirements of GCO and the supply operation. In evaluating the cost estimates and functionality of all possible solutions, including UNIMIS, the secretariat was aware of the concerns of the Member States that had invested heavily in UNIMIS. UNICEF was participating in the payroll and human resources module of UNIMIS, for which $3.5 million had been included in the approved 1996-1997 budget to modify UNIMIS to adapt to meet the needs of UNICEF. UNICEF was collaborating closely with other agencies on PROMS, having shared the system with other interested agencies.

142. Asked to clarify whether there had been an increase or decrease in the number of posts at headquarters, the Deputy Executive Director referred to annex III of the revised budget, which showed a decrease of nine posts. (See the annex, decision 1997/4, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

K. Financial matters

143. The Executive Board considered the following documents:

(a) UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 1995 and report of the Board of Auditors (A/51/5/Add.2);

(b) Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.14);

(c) Financial reports and audited financial statements and reports of the Board of Auditors, report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/51/533/Add.2).

144. Ms. Karin Sham Poo, Deputy Executive Director, introduced the reports. She expressed appreciation to the Board of Auditors, particularly Mr. Osei Tutu Prempeh, Auditor General of Ghana and Chairman of the Board of Auditors up to 31 December 1996, and to Mr. Seth Adza, Director for External Audit and his team. She said that the report of the Board of Auditors was the result of a thorough review of UNICEF management and financial systems. She also expressed appreciation to Ambassador Mselle, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, and the members of the Advisory Committee. She said that UNICEF continued to give the

highest attention to the implementation of the Board of Auditors' recommendations and would continue to take all the necessary steps to implement them.

145. The Deputy Executive Director addressed some of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, but did not address the Kenya audit as it had been discussed under another agenda item. She added that the Board had given UNICEF an unqualified or clean audit opinion on its 1994-1995 accounts, as had been the case for the past several bienniums.

146. The external auditors' concerns about cash assistance to Governments were also of concern to UNICEF, including the policy of recording and timely liquidation. A review of cash assistance to Governments was taking place in light of the UNICEF Financial Regulations and Rules and the organization's programme management procedures. In the review, the "cooperation" role rather than the "implementing" role of UNICEF vis-à-vis government programmes had been highlighted. From an operational perspective, it was clear that UNICEF should transfer resources to Governments. Such transfers of resources, be they supplies, equipment, cash or technical assistance, should be governed by one set of rules, the determination of which would be covered in the ongoing discussions on the subject. UNICEF would continue the dialogue with the Board of Auditors during its semi-annual audits. With regard to concerns about the high level of cash assistance to Governments, while the total balance as of 31 December 1995 had been $120.1 million, as of 30 September 1996, the figure had been reduced to $89.7 million. The cash assistance outstanding for more than nine months had decreased from $34.3 million to $30.1 million during the same period. The 1996 figures were not yet available. In November 1996, the Executive Director had issued a strict directive to all regional directors and representatives to the effect that their authority to make cash assistance to Governments would be suspended if the assistance was not liquidated in a timely fashion.

147. On the Board of Auditors' recommendation that UNICEF should establish a reserve for doubtful contributions receivable to ensure an accurate disclosure of its realizable assets, she said that a thorough review of outstanding balances was under way, accompanied by follow-up with the donors concerned. As a result of these discussions, a donor had remitted $1.481 million on accounts which were written off in prior periods. Also, supplementary fund receivable balances amounting to $6.9 million were confirmed uncollectible by donors and written off in 1996. Discussions were ongoing on long outstanding balances amounting to $3 million. Before the end of the biennium 1996-1997, the secretariat would assess the situation of the contributions receivable balances to ensure accurate disclosure of realizable assets. If deemed necessary, the appropriate reserve would then be provided.

148. The Deputy Executive Director also spoke to the Board of Auditors' recommendation for strengthening internal control. She said that the issue had been mentioned by the Executive Director during her presentation on MEP. The Director of OIA had also stated that the responsibility of regional directors for follow-up to audit recommendations was being clarified. For example, the implementation of PROMS was expected to bring about better controls at the field office level.

149. Delegations commented positively about the commitment of UNICEF to improve internal control and managerial accountability, as well as the organization's responses to the Board of Auditors' observations. It was also mentioned that while some United Nations agencies had received a qualified opinion for their accounts, UNICEF had received an unqualified opinion for its 1994-1995 accounts.

150. Some delegations referred to the Board of Auditors' recommendation that UNICEF should improve further the accuracy of its income projections for unfunded supplementary funding programmes through more realistic budgeting and fund-raising strategies. The Deputy Executive Director said that supplementary contributions consisted of two components, funds for development and funds for emergencies. The second component could be very unpredictable, as seen by a sharp reduction in emergency funds in 1996. The decrease was not due to the inability of UNICEF or other United Nations agencies to raise funds, but to the fact that there had been no new major appeals. In the case of regular supplementary funding, it might be true that for some country programmes prepared in the past, UNICEF had been too optimistic in setting the levels of fund-raising targets. However, those levels represented the maximum authorization to raise funds. UNICEF did not want to set the levels too low and, as a result, limit fund-raising possibilities. The UNICEF financial framework was established in the medium-term plan, which presented the estimates of income on a four-year rolling basis. Experience had shown that UNICEF was fairly accurate in estimating income for both general resources and supplementary funds, but would continue to address the issue.

151. Several delegations asked about the timeliness of implementing the Board of Auditors' recommendations and suggested that a limit of one year be set for implementation. The Deputy Executive Director said that while UNICEF was most interested in ensuring that the recommendations were implemented promptly, there could be cases when the nature of the recommendation would make a one-year limit extremely difficult to meet. The Board of Auditors thoroughly examined the status of implementation of its recommendations during its visits. When implementation was deemed unsatisfactory, the recommendations were again incorporated into the report. There might also be instances when audit recommendations were deemed closed because the whole area had changed.

152. A delegation raised the issue of the dissatisfaction of OIA with the implementation of its audit recommendations. The Deputy Executive Director said that the observation included in the Board of Auditors' report on the 1994-1995 accounts was based on a 1994 report of the Office. The Director of the Office had informed the Board earlier in the session that the Office had developed a better monitoring system. UNICEF would continue to look for possible improvements.

153. A delegation asked for clarification on the following points: (a) the status of the Advisory Committee recommendation for a special audit on the Capital Asset Fund; (b) compliance by UNICEF with General Assembly resolution 47/211 of 23 December 1992; (c) the establishment of accountability and control on cash assistance to Governments; (d) payments made in the field by UNICEF for items which under the Basic Cooperation Agreement should be paid for by Governments; and (e) the extent to which the Board of Auditors' recommendations on budgetary processes could be implemented. The speaker also asked for clarification regarding the Board of Auditors' comments on the transfer by the National Committees of all funds due to UNICEF not later than six months after the end of their fiscal year and the unauthorized destruction of cards by GCO Geneva.

154. The Deputy Executive Director said that the conduct of a special audit on the Capital Asset Fund was a decision of the Board of Auditors. As for compliance with resolution 47/211, she said that in relation to making staff responsible for their actions, as with the Kenya case, UNICEF had taken swift actions and also handed the cases over to the local authorities for possible criminal prosecution. UNICEF would continue to do so if there were cases of a similar nature. UNICEF was also reviewing other management actions that could be taken when staff members did not live up to the standards required of

international civil servants. UNICEF would ensure observance of the review process required by the United Nations system.

155. With regard to cash assistance to Governments, UNICEF would continue to address the concerns raised by the Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee and would work closely with field offices to ensure timely liquidation. As for payments made by UNICEF, the organization continued to monitor and follow-up with field offices in cases when payments were made by UNICEF for items that should be paid for by the recipient country. However, some countries, because of conditions prevailing at certain times, might not be in a position to make the necessary payments. Regarding the implementation of the Board of Auditors' recommendations on budgetary processes, she said that the recommendations had been made during the audits in 1994-1995. Since then, they had been overtaken by the harmonization of the budget presentations of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF and the UNICEF integrated budget.

156. As for the final question, she said that an external study of GCO had just been finalized and some of its findings would be presented to delegations at an inter-sessional meeting on 31 January 1997. Part of the presentation would address how GCO could improve its present performance, how unsold products could be avoided and how more realistic estimates could be made. On the specific question regarding the unauthorized disposal of cards, she stated that the appropriate procedures would be followed in the future.

157. One delegation requested clarification on the seeming inconsistency in the information shown in certain tables of the financial reports and audited financial statements and reports of the Board of Auditors (A/51/533/Add.2). The speaker said that while one table showed small declines in expenditures for Asia and Africa between 1994 and 1995, other tables showed a very sharp increase in the total programmes for Asia between the two years. The speaker also asked if it would be possible to show the expenditures on a per country basis for least developed countries (LDCs) as well as the expenditures that corresponded to the requirements of the 20/20 initiative in the financial report.

158. The Deputy Executive Director said that while one table showed actual expenditures for the biennium, the other tables showed the approvals of the CPRs by the Executive Board during the biennium. CPRs for all countries were not approved at the same time, and in the biennium under review, a great number of CPRs for Asia had been approved. Expenditures on a per country basis for LDCs were already included in the Executive Director's report. Since the financial reports were a standard report, she could not give a commitment to include the information in them. UNICEF would review the possibility of including the information related to the 20/20 initiative in some other report, but not in the financial report.

159. A delegation expressed concern about the reduction in programme implementation of general resources and supplementary-funded country programmes from 79 per cent in 1994 to 76 per cent in 1995. The level of implementation of supplementary-funded programmes of 67 per cent lagged behind the general resource programme level of 89 per cent. The Deputy Executive Director said that while there had been increases in the implementation rates for programmes funded from general resources in the past several years, the slowing down of implementation in the period under review was the result of a deliberate action on the part of management. UNICEF considered the low implementation of supplementary-funded projects to be a serious matter and the secretariat had taken it up with the representatives of the offices concerned.

160. Another delegation asked about the Board of Auditors' recommendation that a clear link be established between administrative costs and country programme

costs to achieve proper balance in resource allocations. The Board of Auditors had indicated that UNICEF should estimate general costs for each country and compare the per country costs in order to minimize costs for programme support. The Deputy Executive Director explained that the document was written before the finalization of the documents on the harmonization of budget presentations of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF and on integrated budgeting in UNICEF. It was expected that when the new CPRs and the new support budget for the biennium 1998-1999 were presented to the Executive Board in September 1997 and in January 1998, respectively, the tables in those documents would answer the question raised as well as the concerns of the Board of Auditors.

161. A delegation requested information on the Board of Auditors' recommendation that the procedures for allocating general resources to country programmes be reviewed. The Deputy Executive Director said that after Executive Board discussions on the allocation of general resources at its third regular session of 1996, the Board had requested the Executive Director to submit a revised proposal no later than the annual session of 1997. In compliance with the Board's decision, the secretariat has not changed the procedures for allocating general resources.

162. The Executive Director emphasized that programme implementation was a major concern for UNICEF, although there could be instances when implementation could not be pushed forward. In those cases, the reasons must be identified and addressed. It was important that the secretariat not give mixed messages to field offices and that UNICEF look into the quality of implementation. While implementation was always a concern, the secretariat was also taking the challenge of cash assistance to Governments very seriously. UNICEF was committed to ensuring that resources were used as effectively as possible. There was now a policy on the roll-over of certain amounts of their general resources allocations to the next year in order to encourage representatives and their teams to ensure the smooth, appropriate and qualitative implementation of programmes. (See the annex, decisions 1997/6 and 1997/10, for the text of the decisions adopted by the Executive Board.)

L. Participation of the United Nations Population Fund in the UNICEF/World Health Organization Joint Committee on Health Policy

163. The Executive Board had before it a report prepared by the secretariat (E/ICEF/1997/6), which was introduced by the Executive Director. The President said that at the Board's third regular session of 1996, the Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA had reported to the Board on a decision taken by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board about the possibility of UNFPA becoming a member of JCHP. Prior to the present session, the secretariat had distributed to delegations a letter from the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board. That letter informed UNICEF of the UNDP/UNFPA Board's decision 97/1, which proposed the following:

(a) That the present UNICEF/WHO JCHP be known as the UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO Coordinating Committee on Health;

(b) That the term of reference of the UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO Coordinating Committee on Health be amended accordingly, in consultation with the secretariats of the three organizations;

(c) That the agenda of the meetings of the UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO Coordinating Committee on Health be organized in such a way that matters of the greatest relevance to UNFPA are clustered together.

164. In the letter, it was stated that the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board further recommended that it become a member of the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health. The President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board had asked that the President bring the matter to the attention of the Board.

165. Most delegations welcomed the inclusion of UNFPA in JCHP. One speaker, supported by others, suggested that the secretariats of WHO and UNICEF use the opportunity to take stock of key accomplishments and lessons learned over the past decades by JCHP and to determine what could be achieved over the next decade. Given the World Bank's contribution in the field of health, it might be appropriate to consider inviting the Bank to join JCHP as well. The same speaker asked if changing the name of the Committee would divert attention from joint work on health policy.

166. Another delegation said that the programme of activities for the new body should be based on its objectives and urged the Executive Board to adopt a more complete decision than the one adopted by the WHO Executive Board. Several delegations said that including UNFPA would revitalize the work of the JCHP by including reproductive health and gender on its agenda. They also suggested that a comprehensive review of the mandate and working methods of the Committee be undertaken. It was suggested by another delegation that UNFPA be a full partner in that review.

167. One speaker, supporting the inclusion of UNFPA in JCHP, said that with the democratization of the political process in her country, a number of groups were advocating the liberalization of abortion laws. As a member of JCHP, UNFPA, with its concern regarding reproductive health, could assist in narrowing the number of abortions sought in her country.

168. The Director for United Nations Affairs and External Relations said that the secretariat had taken note of the support for the inclusion of UNFPA in JCHP, as well as the need for a comprehensive resolution.

169. Responding to a query as to the change in name, the UNICEF representative made it clear that "coordinating" would not preclude discussions of policy matters and that it allows for the inclusion of operational issues on the agenda. As to concern over the clustering of items on the agenda of the new body, this would allows the most efficient utilization of the time of Board members and the secretariats. (See the annex, decision 1997/8, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

M. Oral report on the outcome of consultations on Executive Board/secretariat relations

170. Mr. Stephen Lewis, Deputy Executive Director, reported that during an inter-sessional meeting held in October 1995, several Board members had expressed concern as to whether sufficient attention was being devoted to Board/secretariat relations. It was decided that the issue required examination, and to facilitate this, the Executive Director appointed a team of four secretariat staff members to discuss the matter with the Executive Board. This team met three times with the Bureau between October 1995 and February 1996 to discuss how to proceed: whether on an individual basis, a regional basis, or with the Executive Board as a whole, either formally or informally. At an inter-sessional meeting held in March 1995, the issue was discussed again, and the secretariat was requested to draw up a questionnaire for all Board members and active observers. On the basis of the responses received between March and June, a collation of responses was distributed to Board members and observers, and an informal, open-ended meeting was held in June to discuss the responses.

171. At that time, a paper prepared by a small group known as the "volunteer group", composed of Board members from Ghana, Brazil, Romania, Switzerland and Denmark, was also circulated. That paper addressed the issue of the relationship between the Executive Board and the UNICEF secretariat and where to draw a demarcation line between the Executive Board's role and responsibilities and management's duties and business. The paper was divided under the headings of policies and strategies; operations; organization; structure; staffing; and budget and funding. Four more open-ended meetings were held between June and October and, in the course of addressing each issue in first and second readings, an attempt was made to clarify the respective responsibilities of the Executive Board and management on each item. Differing views were expressed, and consensus was reached on some items. While constructive, however, the end-result was inconclusive. The Deputy Executive Director concluded by seeking the guidance of the Executive Board as to how to proceed, i.e., whether to stop the process on the understanding that things were working well, set up an ad hoc approach to specific concerns or continue the preceding process followed to date.

172. Speaking as a member of the volunteer group, a delegation stated that in addition to the meetings described by the Deputy Executive Director, the work was still very much in progress. The volunteer group had held several more meetings, resulting in a revised document which would be reviewed by the group in a week's time and then presented to delegations for discussion in a series of open-ended informal meetings. He underscored the importance and productiveness of the exercise, saying that the end-result would benefit both the Executive Board and UNICEF as an institution. The speaker said that the work to be accomplished in the coming months should lead to a draft decision to be introduced at the third regular session of 1997.

173. One delegation asked, since UNICEF was 50 years old, if there was something new in the relationship between the Executive Board and the secretariat to justify this study. While it appeared that the working relationship was a smooth one, as attested to by the fact that there were four meetings one year as opposed to one annually for other bodies, he welcomed the process as one which could respond to new situations.

174. Another delegation said that this was a very useful exercise. He said that in 1995, there had been widespread apprehension about the working of the secretariat vis-à-vis its relationship to the Executive Board. Some members had felt that the Board was insufficiently consulted or that some members were taking advantage of their closeness to the secretariat to do certain things. The speaker said that there should be enhanced understanding between the secretariat and the Executive Board, thus enhancing efficiency and cooperation. Both the secretariat and the Executive Board were working together in partnership for shared objectives, and while progress had been made in certain areas, the work had not been concluded.

175. A delegation stated that the subject of relations between the Executive Board and the secretariat was a very important issue and that the process should continue and expand beyond the volunteer group to broad consultations with interested delegations and the secretariat. The speaker expressed her delegation's hope that in the process, the Executive Board could achieve consensus on principles of good governance that would allow the Board to interface with the process of management excellence that it had put in place over the last two years. This would enable the Board to optimize the results of management excellence through improved governance. Members had not discussed among themselves how each related to such issues as the role, responsibility and accountability of the Executive Board, whether the Board as such wanted to focus on policy and strategic guidance, whether it wanted to avoid micromanagement,

how it wanted to set the Board's agendas and other issues. Accordingly, her delegation looked forward to reviewing the work of the small group and to a broader discussion between members and the secretariat.

176. A delegation said that in looking at the relationship between the Board and the secretariat, the Board should look at what kind of governance it wanted to give the organization. In this exercise, the Board could also enhance its own understanding of what kind of guidance it should be providing to the secretariat. He distinguished between governance and management, stating that the Executive Board should be involved in the exercise of governance and should leave the senior management of the organization to the secretariat. The exercise was less one of looking at demarcation lines and more of looking at principles of governance and the principles that governed the relationship. The speaker expressed strong support for the idea of reducing micromanagement and concentrating on the important issues of governance, allowing the Board to limit the number of its sessions during the year. In future, it would be fully appropriate for the Board to dispense with a session in March.

177. A delegation commended the informal groups for examining aspects of Executive Board/management issues which had perplexed members for two years and said that it would be good for the volunteer group to finalize its work and present it to the wider group for consideration at a later stage. However, she urged that at that point, delegations consider very carefully what they wanted to do next. There should be very clear terms of reference for what the wider group was being asked to consider and dissent with previous speakers who were pressing for a very ambitious schedule for the wider working group was expressed. While there was work to be done by delegations in deciding what their role should be and where they wanted to guide the secretariat, it would not be helpful to discuss the problem perpetually. Problems could be dealt with as and when they arose, and it would not be necessary to set up a standing group. When the ad hoc group had made its proposals, the Board could look at its role and the governance issue and try better to define that role with the help of the secretariat.

178. The last speaker supported the idea of the Executive Board articulating principles of governance from the perspective of permitting UNICEF management to manage as well as of the Board to give strategic direction and hoped that the Board could articulate and make that clearer. There was a need for a broadly agreed framework that would enable the Board to manage the inevitable ups and downs that might arise from time to time. Articulating principles of governance would help the Board to manage without micromanagement. Also, there were differing views on the number sessions the Board should hold each year and at some stage, the Board should address the issue.

179. The Deputy Executive Director said that the discussion had revealed a broad desire to continue the process and stated that the secretariat would be happy to participate in it.

N. Other matters

Board member field visits for 1997

180. The President announced that there would be two visits by two separate teams, to Bangladesh, and to Malawi and Zambia. According to the terms of reference for the field visits, one individual from each regional group would participate, with two members of the Western European and Others group taking part. The members of the Bureau would be following up with their respective regional groups in the coming days as the secretariat needed to have the names of the participants by 31 January.

Membership in the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy and the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education

181. The President informed delegations that the Vice-Presidents would be following up on the issue of membership in JCHP (to be reconstituted as the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education. Detailed information on the terms of reference and membership in the two committees had been provided to each Vice-President, and delegations were requested to provide their respective Vice-Presidents with the names of nominees for members and alternates by 10 March. Elections would be held during the second regular session in March.

Elections to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

182. The Deputy Executive Director, Stephen Lewis, reminded delegations that elections for vacant seats on the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which is charged with examining progress made in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, would be held on 18 February. All 189 ratifying countries were entitled to vote, making it the largest election within the United Nations system. There were five vacancies to be filled for a four-year term on the 10-member Committee and, at present, 31 candidates had been nominated. He was drawing the attention of delegations to this election so that they might reinforce the sense of its importance within their own countries.

Fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF

183. Noting that there were many activities throughout the world in 1996 in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF, a delegation asked whether a document could be prepared that summed up the various actions that had been undertaken. Such a document, he continued, could be disseminated to National Committees for information and advocacy purposes. The Executive Director replied that while there were many activities relating to the anniversary, UNICEF had quite specifically focused its activities in the countries within which it was working as well as in countries in which there were National Committees. The main purpose was to use the fiftieth anniversary as a way to further strengthen the work of the organization. A summary of some of the activities ranging from advocacy to programmatic issues had been prepared and she would be pleased to make the information available and to report back to the Board on this, even orally, at the annual session in June. Information on specific activities could be made available to interested delegations.

Cooperation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund

184. A delegation commented positively on the Executive Director's exchange of correspondence with the President of the World Bank and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), saying it was very helpful in sensitizing the two organizations in matters of cooperation. He was particularly impressed by the way the Executive Director dealt with child labour and cooperation in this area. He also commended the Executive Director and the secretariat for bringing the issue of child labour to prominence in the *1997 State of the World's Children* report. The Executive Director expressed appreciation for the comments, noting the UNICEF takes its relationships with the World Bank and IMF very seriously and sees its partnership with them increasing in the future.

Child abuse

185. The same speaker spoke on the subject of child abuse, suggesting that it be made the main theme of a future *State of the World's Children* report. The

Executive Director thanked the delegation for the suggestion, adding that UNICEF took the issue of child abuse and violence against children very seriously. In fact, the issue of violence against children was already integrated in some country programmes, and it was increasingly becoming a focus of others, in partnership with Governments. This was not a subject that should wait for inclusion in a publication to be explored.

Future meetings

186. The Secretary of the Board announced the proposed dates for the pre-Board information meetings for the remainder of 1997: (a) second regular session - 6 March; (b) annual session - 21 May; and (c) third regular session - 3 September. The Executive Director informed delegations about the following informal meetings: (a) 31 January - on supply and GCO activities; (b) 27 February - on the allocation of general resources (the secretariat would present revised proposals at the annual session in June); and (c) 4 March - on financial management systems and an information and communications strategy.

O. Concluding remarks

187. The Executive Director noted the very businesslike and productive discussions and actions taken during the session that would allow UNICEF to move forward in a number of areas, including health, emergency interventions, harmonization of procedures and systems, and management excellence. The detailed and very useful comments made by delegations on the country notes, as well as on the presentations by the regional directors, indicated the Board's strong interest in and support for country programmes. She reassured delegations that the organization's emphasis on rights in no way detracted from its strong commitment to the goals of the World Summit for Children. In fact, the child rights approach gave greater strength to the work of UNICEF because it emphasized the legal and moral obligations of all partners to achieve the World Summit goals. The challenge, she said, "can and must be met". (See E/ICEF/1997/CRP.8 for the full text of her remarks.)

188. The President of the Executive Board commented on the importance of the country notes and the issue of child rights. She noted the systematic efforts UNICEF was making to generate a flexible administrative structure that would enable the organization to respond to changing realities. She recalled the substantive discussions of UNICEF emergency interventions and implementation of the health policy, which demonstrated concern for improving quality of life. She noted the enormity of the task ahead, and thanked, in particular, the Vice-Presidents, who helped her in her work, as well as the UNICEF secretariat and United Nations Conference Services staff for their assistance during the session.

Part two

SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF 1997

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 18 to 19 March 1997

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening statements

189. The President opened the session and welcomed delegations. The Executive Director spoke of recent successes and continuing challenges concerning the situation of children worldwide. These included Switzerland's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which brought to 190 the number of States Parties. The recent Amsterdam Conference on Child Labour, hosted by the Government of the Netherlands and organized in close collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), had called for a new ILO instrument on the most hazardous exploitative forms of labour to be drafted in consultation with relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A related development was the agreement signed in February between the sporting goods industry and ILO, Save the Children and UNICEF to eliminate child labour in Pakistan's soccer ball industry.

190. The Executive Director also reported briefly about UNICEF activities in the Great Lakes region of Africa, where the situation, particularly in Eastern Zaire, continued to deteriorate. In the past few months, UNICEF emergency interventions had been focused on ensuring protection and care of the most vulnerable children, including tracing and reunification of unaccompanied children; provision of primary health care services and of safe water, sanitation and hygiene education, particularly in the camps for refugees and displaced people; monitoring children's nutritional status and supporting therapeutic feeding; and provision of emergency supplies. UNICEF had carried out those activities in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme and a number of partner NGOs.

191. Referring to the issue of the UNICEF headquarters financial management system, which would be the subject of an informal consultation during the session, she said it was her firm belief that investing in a new financial system would contribute to containment of programme support and administrative costs and ultimately improve programme delivery. After a very careful review, the secretariat had found that the United Nations Integrated Management Information System (UNIMIS) could not meet the needs of UNICEF for a number of reasons. It would not allow UNICEF to have a unified financial system, and would require separate systems for the Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO) and Supply Division. Using an outside vendor would save UNICEF about $9 million. However, the secretariat understood fully the need to collaborate with its United Nations colleagues to the greatest extent possible and had chosen to be part of UNIMIS for human resources and payroll, at a cost of more than $3 million. The decision-making process would be open and transparent, and based on the need to use resources as efficiently as possible.

B. Adoption of the agenda

192. The agenda of the session, as contained in document E/ICEF/1997/8 and Corr.1, was adopted as orally amended. The agenda contained the following items:

Item 1: Opening of the session: statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director

Item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work

Item 3: Elections

(a) Executive Board representatives to the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP) (to become the WHO/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Coordinating Committee on Health (CCH)) for the 1997-1998 biennium

(b) Executive Board representatives to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education (JCE) for the 1997-1998 biennium

Item 4: Mid-term reviews (MTRs) and major evaluations of country programmes

Item 5: Report of the Executive Director: Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

Item 6: Oral report on the Management Excellence Programme (MEP)

Item 7: 1997 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

Item 8: Other matters

Item 9: Closing of the session

193. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 48 observer delegations had submitted credentials for the session. In addition, four United Nations bodies, one specialized agency and six NGOs had submitted credentials.

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Election of Executive Board representatives to the joint committees for the 1997-1998 biennium

194. The President said that in accordance with decision 1994/R.2/5 (E/ICEF/1994/13/Rev.1), the Executive Board elects five members to JCE and to the JCHP, in addition to the President of the Board, who is an ex officio member. The five members are elected in their personal capacity and represent the five regional groups. Five alternate members are also elected in their personal capacity from the same country as the members. The members and their alternates nominated by States should be senior persons with relevant professional and UNICEF Board expertise and experience, able to provide technical guidance and policy advice to the concerned organizations. Representatives may not serve for more than two consecutive terms unless they become ex officio members.

195. She added that in accordance with decision 1997/8 (see the annex), adopted at the first regular session in January, and a decision of the WHO Executive Board, UNFPA was to become a member of the new CCH. JCHP would hold its final meeting later in the year. UNFPA would participate in the concluding meeting of JCHP and in the discussion of the role and mandate of CCH. (See the annex, decision 1997/13, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board, including the names of the members elected to the two committees.)

B. Mid-term reviews and major evaluations of country programmes

General discussion

196. The Director of Programme Division and the Director of the Evaluation, Policy and Planning (EPP) Division each spoke briefly about general issues covered in the regional reports on MTRs and evaluations (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.11-E/ICEF/1997/P/L.16). The Director, EPP said that the UNICEF strategy to strengthen the quality and relevance of evaluative work included staff training, recognizing good evaluation practice, broadening the range of methodologies and providing support to the regional and country levels. The promotion of a "pro-evaluation culture" was an important contribution to strengthened oversight and accountability, improved programme performance and organizational learning and strategic planning. The Executive Director underlined her commitment to this endeavour, which would require an organization-wide effort.

197. Delegations expressed appreciation for the wealth of information in the regional reports and welcomed the candour and honesty in acknowledging problems encountered. One delegation said that initial programme objectives appeared to have been overly ambitious in some cases. Delegations strongly underlined the importance of evaluations and MTRs to ensure that implementation is on track and to improve the impact and efficiency of programmes. Some speakers said they wished to see more country programme evaluations from a wider range of country contexts; the two presented this year were from emergency countries.

198. Many delegations remarked on the diversity of format and requested a more standardized presentation in future. Several suggested using the format of the report for the Eastern and Southern Africa region, and possibly including additional material in future, in the form of a comparative table with selected indicators, or a synoptic overview. It was also suggested that reports on MTRs and country programme evaluations include more information on the utilization of funds. The lack of data on costs made it difficult to form judgements about cost-effectiveness or efficiency. Other speakers said that shortfalls in supplementary funds contributions suggested that targets for supplementary funding should be more realistic, given the current climate of resource constraints. The importance for sustainability of adequate funding and of strategies to strengthen local institutional capacity was also emphasized.

199. Although the lessons learned were of considerable interest, it was pointed out that they were often phrased in very general terms, and that more analysis of causes and possible remedial action was needed. Reporting should focus not only on the achievements but also on the constraints, which were not always well covered. Delegations also expressed interest in learning about what was not successful, about reasons for deviations in implementation and corrective measures taken. One delegation asked the secretariat to look more closely into the aggregation of the findings from evaluations so as to have a clearer picture of programme performance. In this respect, several speakers said that more systematic reporting on results was needed, particularly in relation to objectives pursued. Delegations mentioned the need for more specific details about the contribution of UNICEF, showing the connection between UNICEF inputs and outcomes. Most comments seemed to focus on the achievement of sustainable results, which implied a collective effort in partnership with government and other actors, making it difficult to attribute causality to the specific inputs of any single agency.

200. Several delegations pointed to the limited references to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the goals of the World Summit for Children, the 20/20 Initiative, the situation analysis, country strategy note or the national programme of action, and asked how far these important initiatives and instruments had influenced programming. The importance of United Nations coordination was mentioned, as was the formulation of common monitoring and evaluation guidelines by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy.

201. Several delegations said that evaluations and MTRs pinpointed shortcomings and problems that were already known in such areas as community participation and social mobilization, coordination, planning and decentralization. They asked how UNICEF could ensure that lessons were really learned and that knowledge gained from evaluations was widely accessible and utilized elsewhere in the organization, to avoid continued recurrence of the problems. Another delegation underlined the need for UNICEF and its partners to capitalize fully on the wealth of experience and learning from the large volume of evaluations and studies conducted each year, and encouraged wide access to and utilization of the evaluation database.

202. Several delegations commented on evaluation methodologies, encouraging the wider use of participatory methods involving programme beneficiaries, including children. This would be likely to build a broader consensus around the evaluation recommendations, thus facilitating their implementation. Another speaker said that qualitative techniques were important, especially in programme areas that did not lend themselves to the more familiar quantitative techniques.

203. Many delegations raised questions about evaluation procedures and practices, asking about the roles and responsibilities for evaluation at headquarters, regional and country levels and if offices were complying with evaluation requirements. The secretariat said that New York headquarters was responsible for issuing global guidelines and synthesizing lessons learned; regional offices were responsible for assisting country offices in drawing up integrated monitoring and evaluation plans; and country offices were responsible for developing and implementing those plans.

204. It was also asked if all country programmes and emergency programmes were subject to an MTR, how evaluation quality could be maintained and improved and how MTRs and evaluations would be used in the current context of organizational change. A speaker said that answers to some of the questions were expected in the report on management excellence to be presented to the Board at the third regular session in September, which would cover oversight, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. The same delegation suggested that an informal briefing session might be necessary.

205. With regard to content, several delegations mentioned that few evaluations dealt with issues related to child rights, such as sexual exploitation of children. Many evaluations covered service delivery, but more attention was needed to capacity-building, advocacy and social mobilization. Regarding community participation, a delegation said that there had been little mention of children's participation in the programming process.

206. Overall, delegations said that the MTR process had brought together information about new initiatives, achievements and constraints, insights into what was working and what was not, as well as analysis of management issues, evolving strategies and fund-raising difficulties. One delegation said that the MTRs had been helpful in assessing performance and better defining the lines of authority. The lessons learned section was the most useful part of each document. Future documents should reflect the balance between needs and rights, and how the gaps between them would be addressed.

207. Several delegations said that UNICEF had in several instances overstated the impact of its own assistance. Very often, UNICEF was working with a range of partners in a particular sector, all of whom could take credit for achievements. Documents should contain a more analytical assessment of the involvement of government, bilateral and multilateral agencies. There should also be mention of the steps taken to improve coordination in the programmes being reported on. As far as education was concerned, several extraneous factors (lack of buildings, distance, availability of teachers) had an impact on programme achievements but were outside the manageable interest of the programme.

208. One delegation suggested that there should be a more systematic method of reporting on programme achievements. MTR documents should compare results achieved with original objectives. There was also a need to explain more clearly how the problems that had been identified would be remedied. More information should be given on changes in programme structure and processes to be carried out as a result of the MTRs. It was also suggested that the MTR document present clearer information on the use of funds and more cost/benefit analysis.

209. The Director of Programme Division re-emphasized the secretariat's strong commitment to make UNICEF more of a learning organization, in order to ensure maximum relevance and impact of country programmes. The Director, EPP provided figures suggesting that the trend of evaluation work was to give more attention to rights, protection and the other strategies that had been flagged for more emphasis. She also gave examples of the involvement of children in evaluation activities. Regarding channels for dissemination of lessons, she mentioned the evaluation database of 6,000 studies and evaluations, various publications, the UNICEF site on the World Wide Web and reporting to global and regional meetings.

Africa

210. The Executive Board had before it reports for Eastern and Southern Africa (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.11) and West and Central Africa (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.12), which were introduced by the respective Regional Directors.

211. Several delegations expressed satisfaction with the MTR from Kenya. The general opinion was that the Kenya MTR had been sensitive but had increased the manageability of the programme. One speaker said there was a need to balance service delivery and advocacy in the country programme. Another asked about the impact of the reduction in the number of intervention zones from 18 to 6 and whether such reductions would affect the needs and rights of the children in areas no longer covered by UNICEF programmes. The speaker asked if other donors would be invited to cover the areas that UNICEF was no longer covering.

212. One delegation stated that in Botswana, the shift from antenatal care to the improved management of obstetrical emergencies was rational and positive, and that HIV/AIDS initiatives should be continued. The speaker also asked whether the merger of health and nutrition activities in Botswana was a refocusing of activities or simply a repackaging.

213. Several delegations commented on the MTR for Mozambique, in which their local representatives had participated. They said that the role of the Government in the programme should have been assessed more critically and that more emphasis should have been placed on analysing capacity-building and social mobilization. One delegation suggested that there might be problems of coordination and integration of UNICEF health programmes in the Government's health plans. The speaker expressed the hope that such questions would be solved at field level. It was also stated that the MTR process should be used to determine the division of labour for the remainder of the programming period. One delegation described the report as too descriptive; the lack of analysis meant that it was difficult to judge the achievements of the programme. Several delegations also questioned the positive findings of the MTR report. One delegation said that the MTR for Mozambique should also have included an analysis of programme feasibility in relation to reconstruction and rehabilitation.

214. With regard to the Congo evaluation, one delegation requested clarification of the statement that "... strong involvement of external agencies could undermine the sustainability of the health reform ..." in paragraph 40.

215. One delegation asked UNICEF to provide an analysis of the logistics and essential drugs components of the Bamako Initiative. Another suggested that the Initiative was making a positive contribution and should be expanded. The secretariat said that the Bamako Initiative had been successful in solving problems of drug supply, and had gone a long way to strengthening capacity in logistics and procurement systems. The processes involved in promoting the Initiative were complex and involved many partners. In several instances, low utilization rates at health centres had to do with distance and the existence of alternatives to primary health care. Health centres were obliged to maintain user fees to cover operating costs, and to ensure the quality of drugs and treatment.

216. To a suggestion that higher priority should be given to sanitation and sanitation education, the secretariat said that improvements in sanitation were challenging. Prototype latrines were being developed, but did not always lead to reduced costs, a major consideration in determining their acceptability.

217. With regard to the Benin MTR, one delegation requested clarification of the reasons for the low utilization of health centres. Another expressed concern that the report did not raise the issue of progress towards the objective of government responsibility for vaccine procurement by the year 2000.

218. Concerning the evaluation of the Nigeria country programme, a speaker questioned the conclusions contained in paragraph 51 of the report, saying that the use of educational materials should not be dismissed since such materials were often a means of reinforcing what had been learned from other sources. The speaker underlined the success of the Bamako Initiative in spite of a difficult environment and said that the whole issue of sustainability was crucial.

219. One delegation suggested that the report on the Chad evaluation should have given details of the measures to be used to correct the problems that had been identified. More detail was needed on the specific conclusions of the evaluation and how these were being incorporated into programme redesign. The delegation asked whether successful experiences in community participation were being fed into national policy. The Regional Director for West and Central

Africa said it was important to note that the country had been through 30 years of conflict, that the accessibility of different regions was constantly changing and that political and economic changes were unpredictable. At this stage in the programming cycle, the country office was trying to establish broad guidelines for the new country programme, rather than focusing on details. The feasibility analysis mentioned in the report would enable programme managers to test the objectives and structures of the current programme against the findings of the evaluation.

220. A delegation expressed appreciation for the monitoring of structural adjustment carried out by UNICEF in Zimbabwe, and another expressed interest in Mauritania's experience in promoting community-level participation. The West and Central Africa region faced many difficulties and was experiencing several ongoing complex emergencies, according to a speaker, who appreciated the progress being made by programmes in the region. A delegation said that its Government was collaborating with UNICEF on water and sanitation programmes in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, a fact not mentioned in any of the MTR reports. Another speaker suggested greater focus on urban problems.

221. The representative of Rwanda expressed his Government's disagreement with the figures describing the number of Rwandan refugees in Zaire used by the Regional Director for West and Central Africa in her oral presentation of the MTR report. He said that there were no longer any Rwandan refugees in Zaire following the massive voluntary return in November 1996. Only the former Rwandan armed forces, the militias and their families remained. Among them were innocent children. He thanked the Executive Director for the assistance provided by UNICEF to care for them and help them to return to Rwanda. They were being cared for at Goma.

222. Both Regional Directors said that specific issues raised would be addressed on a bilateral basis.

Americas and the Caribbean

223. The Executive Board had before it a regional report for the Americas and the Caribbean (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.13), which was introduced by the Regional Director.

224. Several delegations said that the report was too general, insufficiently analytical and lacking specific information on programme achievements and constraints. Speakers also asked how the results of the MTRs and evaluations had influenced the relevant country programmes and what changes had been introduced either at the strategy or policy level. A delegation referred to the evolving functions of headquarters and regional office locations and asked the Regional Director to comment on how she perceived the relationship and division of labour between both locations in the field of evaluations and MTRs. The Regional Director said that efforts would be made to improve the quality of future reports on MTRs and evaluations and referred to efforts underway to improve monitoring and evaluation capacities in the region.

225. Several delegations, while recognizing page limitations in a document of this type, indicated concern that country specificities were not evident in the summary of the multi-island MTR. A speaker said that while a stronger UNICEF presence in Suriname should be considered, the basis for this presence was not evident from the report. Some delegations asked for specific details on how the 20/20 concept, which was mentioned in the report, was being applied in the multi-island programme. The Regional Director replied that while the report for the multi-island programme MTR did not highlight country specificities, they had indeed been considered at the MTR and the new multi-country programme strategy attempted to deal with the differences between the countries by grouping

countries around common problems and trends. Suriname was now included as part of the multi-country programme, which was a step towards securing a stronger UNICEF presence in that country.

226. Referring to the Haiti MTR and country programme evaluation, a delegation noted the good record of work with NGOs and emphasized the importance of strengthening the institutional capacity of the Government as part of the transition from emergency to a more regular type of programme. It was asked if increased attention would be given to such problems as HIV/AIDS, adolescent pregnancies and street children. A delegation requested information on the likelihood of increased supplementary funding for immunization in Haiti. Another said that the report on the Haiti evaluation was not analytical enough and the lessons learned were not apparent. The Regional Director replied that the Haiti office had been more successful in obtaining funds for education but was negotiating for funds for the expanded programme on immunization.

227. Referring to the evaluation of programmes to control iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) in Bolivia, a delegation indicated the importance of improved coordination with donors in the field and the need to improve government ownership of programmes. The Regional Director said that a United Nations mission on best practices which had just visited Bolivia had identified UNICEF as one of the agencies that was doing the most to improve coordination with donors and the Government. However, efforts to improve coordination would continue.

228. Several delegations endorsed the findings of the evaluation of the Central American water and sanitation programme, particularly on the importance of hygiene education and sanitation and of community participation, including cost-recovery as a predictor of sustainability. A delegation said there were good models of community-based water and sanitation programmes in the Dominican Republic, which might be of interest to programme managers. Another referred to the strategic nature of this subregional programme, especially in view of cholera epidemics which crossed national barriers.

229. Referring to the evaluation of programmes for children in especially difficult circumstances in Brazil, a speaker asked if any concrete steps had been taken on the recommendation to end child labour for children under 14 years through the provision of economic subsidies. The representative of Brazil outlined actions being undertaken by the Government and other partners to end child labour in that country. A delegation asked how innovative approaches and best practices such as the one referred to on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Ecuador would be shared and incorporated into UNICEF strategic planning, programming and advocacy. Another delegation said that UNICEF had done a good job in the field of child rights legislation in Guatemala and endorsed the role of UNICEF as a technical adviser, not executor. This was deemed especially appropriate in the case of Peru, where the office was perceived as understaffed.

230. Concerning the Colombia MTR, various delegations asked if the extension of the country programme would have financial implications. The Regional Director replied that there would be no additional cost due to slow implementation in the first year of the country programme. Several speakers referred to paragraph 3 of the report and asked for further details on the types of adjustments that had been made to the country programme management plan. A delegation said that the information provided on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was not specific and another asked what was meant by the reference to UNICEF as a "catalyst for change". The Regional Director said that this concept was related to the facilitator role played by UNICEF in bringing groups together from the governmental, non-governmental and private sectors to examine child-related concerns. She acknowledged the need to do more to share best

practices and referred to a CD-ROM database of evaluations sent by headquarters as a useful example.

Asia

231. The Executive Board had before it reports for East Asia and the Pacific (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.14), introduced by the Regional Director, and for South Asia (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.15), introduced by the Deputy Regional Director.

232. Some delegations said that future reports should have an improved format, be more analytical and identify obstacles to, and opportunities for, the UNICEF contribution. A speaker specifically asked for more information on the important area of collaboration with NGOs. Another requested information on the methodologies used and offered to share her agency's experience with different evaluation methodologies. The speaker encouraged monitoring and follow-up of programmes, with the results linked to the situation analysis and future programme development. She suggested publication of the results, particularly in fact sheets, and sharing them with partners, including donors. She also suggested that the evaluation results be submitted to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The same speaker expressed disappointment at the slow overall progress with salt iodization, but said she was pleased with the progress made in the related projects supported by her Government. She also encouraged UNICEF to support and promote the activities of local governments and NGOs concerning child protection.

233. Referring to the Philippines MTR, a speaker said that having local reviews prior to the national review probably gave UNICEF inputs a high profile locally, and served to make them more effective. The process provided was example for other countries in the region. Another delegation said that UNICEF had supported the Philippine Government's decentralization process and focused on the issue of child labour and child prostitution. The importance of strengthening local capacity for effective collaboration with other partners in the Philippines was emphasized by another speaker. Successful private sector fund-raising in the Philippines and Thailand set an example for other regions.

234. Commenting on the evaluation of education in Cambodia, one delegation said that the experience gained in home-based early childhood development should be shared in the region. Another speaker suggested wider dissemination of the experiences gained in achieving the mid-decade goals and in the implementation of the project on community health financing in China.

235. A delegation questioned the wisdom of the young career development project in Thailand and asked what UNICEF would do to ensure that girls involved did not become victims of big city life, or fall prey to other ills associated with sex tourism. The Regional Director said that the institutions involved were five star hotels that did not entertain prostitution. While the project provided very good opportunities for a few young girls, UNICEF would continue to develop more long-term and sustainable programmes for this target group. Another speaker supported the reallocation of funds previously used to support basic health services for support to children in need of special protection measures and for the HIV/AIDS programme in Thailand. The speaker praised UNICEF collaboration with NGOs and other United Nations agencies and support for education for at-risk youth.

236. Several speakers expressed concern over the emergency situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. A delegation suggested that transparency in UNICEF relief efforts would elicit further international support for that country. Another asked about UNICEF involvement and objectives in the current assessment mission to the country. The Regional Director said that a resident

UNICEF project officer was monitoring the emergency relief operations and participating in the assessment mission. UNICEF was prepared to join the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in a third emergency appeal.

237. A delegation welcomed UNICEF support to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for vaccines, oral rehydration salts and iodized salt, but asked about the cost-effectiveness of providing video cassette recorders and television sets to rural schools, given the unreliability of electricity supplies and possible weakness of maintenance services. The speaker asked if UNICEF should not identify some external sources of textbooks, to guarantee the appropriate content, rather than providing paper for book production. The Regional Director made a commitment to continue to shift from providing hardware towards focusing on software. However, because some rural schools were in very isolated areas, providing supplies was necessary for the moment to ensure that the schools got some assistance.

238. Commenting on the South Asian regional report, a delegation said that many of its findings were in line with its own concerns, especially the recognition of the need for balance between efforts devoted to national immunization days and regular immunization activities. The speaker expressed concern that in Nepal, UNICEF had reduced funding of immunization activities too suddenly. Coverage levels had not been improving, and UNICEF should review its commitment to the programme and encourage other donors to fill the gap.

239. Saying that iodized salt was reaching 25 per cent of the population in the region, a speaker asked if this included areas of greatest need. The speaker agreed with the importance being attached to creating public awareness and demand, which was a critical element of any successful micronutrient programme. Quality assurance and rigorous monitoring, which the evaluations had highlighted, were essential for sustainability of IDD control programmes. A delegation supported the fact that UNICEF had recognized problems in meeting the salt iodization goal, with difficulties clearly analyzed and lessons being drawn.

240. A delegation said that the issues presented in the Deputy Regional Director's introduction were much clearer than the report itself, which was rather confusing, inconsistent, lacking objectivity and inconclusive. Another delegation, however, said that the report was of very high quality. The first speaker also expressed concern that the Maldives, which had done well in building capacity for delivery of social services, had not been able to attract supplementary funding, and asked donors to help mobilize more resources.

241. Regarding the evaluation of primary education, a delegation said that the findings of the evaluations in Nepal and Bangladesh were very similar, pointing to limited effectiveness of these programmes, including the basic primary education programme in Nepal. These findings supported the delegation's own feedback through its bilateral programmes, particularly about the question of female teachers.

242. A delegation expressed satisfaction with the changes and new approaches proposed for the Nepal country programme. However, recent information indicated that serious problems were being experienced in implementing the change from a sectoral to a thematic approach. The changes had created confusion with the Government and NGO partners, had affected the credibility of UNICEF and led to personnel changes. The speaker requested more information on the situation and asked whether UNICEF could not have handled these changes in a more tactical way.

243. The Regional Director for South Asia replied that over the past few years, it had become obvious that the Nepal programme had become fragmented and

ineffective and would have to focus on a limited number of programmes. UNICEF had tried to innovate by clustering projects around themes and creating teams within the office to manage this approach. In the process of implementing the new approach, UNICEF had learned many things, both positive and negative. Above all, it was difficult for UNICEF to work in a thematic way when government and other partners worked sectorally. Consequently, when the country programme recommendation was presented, it proposed that only around 25 per cent of resources be allocated to the thematic approach. A lot of work had already gone into recreating a sectoral approach without losing some of the positive aspects of the thematic approach. It has also been realized that the Nepal office needed to be strengthened to ensure that UNICEF had the highest quality staffing possible. The regional office had become more directly involved in working with the Government of Nepal to ensure the conditions required for programme implementation.

Middle East and North Africa

244. The Executive Board had before it a regional report for the Middle East and North Africa (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.16), which was introduced by the Regional Director.

245. A speaker said that the progress made in Djibouti was reflected in the MTR, especially in the areas of decentralization and social mobilization and in the success of the gender equality project. The delegation endorsed the recommendations of the MTR that drew attention to the continued focus on health and education for girls. Another delegation expressed support for gender mainstreaming, and said that non-formal "alternative" education for girls was an important achievement worthy of consideration in other countries.

246. A delegation said that the Child-Friendly Village Initiative in the Sudan should be highlighted as a good example to be considered in other countries. Another speaker said that UNICEF should be vigilant so that all communities benefited from UNICEF-assisted projects, as guaranteed under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and that UNICEF should reconsider its support if there was evidence that any particular community was excluded. It was stated that the reference in paragraph 20 of the report to a project visit by representatives of the Canadian Government was inaccurate, as a representative of the Canadian Committee for UNICEF had taken part.

247. Referring to the evaluation of the girls' education project in Morocco, a delegation said the project was a good one, with positive results. It raised awareness of equal rights for girls, increased girls' enrolment significantly and had expanded from 5 to 17 provinces. The project was supported by several donors, which contributed to its success. Other delegations said that drop-out and retention rate figures should have been analysed and reported, as they needed to be considered in the future direction of the project. Another delegation stressed the importance of boosting girls' education throughout the region, as well as raising enrolment and reducing drop-out and repetition rates.

248. A delegation spoke about UNICEF assistance to Iraq in the aftermath of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Security Council resolution 986 (1995). The speaker said that UNICEF had reduced its activities, including immunization, because of insufficient funds, and was not paying attention to the needs expressed by the Ministry of Health. At the same time, UNICEF had a large contingent of staff and supporting facilities in Iraq, costing a lot of money. Even if supplies were processed in a timely manner under the resolution, it was insufficient compared to the needs of vulnerable children and women. However, there were delays by the Sanctions Committee in releasing the supply requests. The speaker asked for more attention to Iraq's children and for greater support

from UNICEF. The Regional Director emphasized the importance given to Iraq's children and women by UNICEF and the need for basic staff and facilities to support implementation of resolution 986. He said he would convey the concerns to the UNICEF office.

Conclusion of discussion

249. The President announced that in accordance with decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), adopted at the first regular session of 1995, the secretariat had taken note of the comments made during the discussion and would share them with the offices concerned.

C. Report of the Executive Director: annual report to the Economic and Social Council

250. The Executive Board had before it that part of the report of the Executive Director which also serves as the annual report to the Economic and Social Council (E/ICEF/1997/10 (Part I)). The report was introduced by the Director, United Nations Affairs and External Relations.

251. There was general agreement that the report was comprehensive and contained much useful information. However, a number of delegations said that it could have been more analytical and problem-oriented. Most agreed that the number of issues involved and the page limitations made more extensive reporting a challenge.

252. A number of delegations expressed concern over the decline in general resources and encouraged the Executive Director to accelerate fund-raising activities with non-governmental partners. A number of speakers also expressed appreciation for the increased level of resources allocated to Africa. The Executive Director described ongoing fund-raising efforts, including the positive working relationship with National Committees for UNICEF. In addition, she said that secretariat representatives met regularly with donor government officials in capitals.

253. Addressing the issue of common premises, speakers said there were positive benefits, particularly in the light of cost savings. The Executive Director said that UNICEF was committed to common premises as long as they were cost-effective, but cautioned against proceeding too quickly until a better management system was in place. There was a request for future status reports on the issue.

254. Several delegations commended the positive role played by field committees and thematic groups. There was support for further harmonization within the United Nations system in operational activities, including programme cycles, capacity-building, national execution and participation by NGOs. The secretariat reported on the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation within UNICEF.

255. Responding to a number of requests for the UNICEF view on the Secretary-General's "track one" initiative for United Nations reform, the secretariat said that the idea of the country framework came out of suggestions made in the Committee on Development Operations, of which UNICEF was a member. Other, more general steps towards reform reflected suggestions made by various parts of the United Nations system. The reform measures of UNICEF would be compatible with and/or part of the Secretary-General's reform package.

256. It was suggested that intersessional or informal meetings be held to discuss the 20/20 Initiative and the mobilization of new and innovative sources of funding.

257. See the annex, decision 1997/11, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

D. Management Excellence Programme

258. The Executive Board had before it a report on progress in the implementation of MEP (E/ICEF/1997/CRP.9 and Corr.1), which was introduced by the Executive Director. She said that due to successful mainstreaming of management excellence to appropriate line managers, responses to decision 1996/32 (E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1) could also be found in a number of companion documents to be reviewed in conjunction with reports on management excellence.

259. Delegations expressed appreciation for progress achieved to date, as demonstrated in early reporting of efficiency gains, including the reorganization of the Regional Office for Europe in Geneva to serve as focal point for National Committees, cost savings from reorganization of functions and the growing use of e-mail. Responding to a request for information on the development of common services, the Executive Director said the secretariat was looking at possibilities for consolidation in locations where there is more than one UNICEF office.

260. The strengthening of the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) was welcomed by delegations. One speaker requested that findings from OIA visits to regional offices be included in future reports on management excellence. Another looked forward to receiving detailed information on the activities of OIA in the report on MEP to be submitted at the third regular session.

261. A number of speakers inquired about plans for the reconfiguration of GCO and results achieved to date, especially in relation to European and Latin American markets. The Executive Director said that informal discussions within GCO were moving in the direction of more focused card activities and key markets, but production would not be moved closer to markets.

262. Delegations expressed appreciation for the report's description of the UNICEF accountability system for the supply function, and one speaker requested more information on system-wide coordination of supply activities. A delegation made reference to the problems detected last year in Copenhagen during the course of an internal audit, asking what steps had been taken to rectify the situation and the lessons learned from the experience. The Executive Director said that the Danish authorities were continuing to investigate the matter, and she would report to the Board when she had any new information. A delegation expressed support for savings registered so far from the reorganization of supply cycle times and costs. Asked about steps taken to make more use of local resources, the Executive Director emphasized the need for UNICEF to develop further its own internal capacity in order to help build local capacities.

263. Some speakers expressed concern over the slow pace of management reform and lack of concrete results, but others said that progress had been made in defining roles and responsibilities, decentralization, savings, efficiencies and general improvements. A clear timetable outlining the achievement of management excellence goals was requested, as was information on problems encountered by the secretariat in implementing reforms. It was also stated that UNICEF reform efforts should be adjusted in response to the Secretary General's new initiatives.

264. Several delegations said that more detailed information was needed on roles and responsibilities at country, regional and headquarters offices, including budgetary and human resource implications and efficiency gains. The information was seen as essential to a more informed assessment of the 1998-1999 biennium budget. A speaker requested more information on country offices'

coordination with other United Nations agencies. Another speaker said that accountabilities for governance should be defined for the Executive Board and secretariat, and offered to share national experiences of linking accountabilities to government and management structures.

265. A number of delegations expressed concern about staff morale in UNICEF and encouraged the continued strengthening of human resources management as a priority. A delegation welcomed the creation of a career management group within the Division of Human Resources, and another said that higher standards were needed in the UNICEF management culture to address problems of lack of clarity in work and transparency. The need to ensure a stable work environment and open dialogue between management and staff representatives was stressed. Information was requested on the process of redeployment of staff with permanent contracts. A few speakers said that management reform was demanding for staff and that staff insecurity was to be expected, so the human dimension should not be ignored. A delegation requested updates on how management excellence had affected staff in terms of numbers, working conditions and staff morale.

E. 1997 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

266. The Executive Board had before it a report containing a recommendation by the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1997/9), endorsed by the Bureau, that the 1997 Maurice Pate Award be given to the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) of Namibia. Following the Board's approval of the recommendation, the representative of Namibia said that she was proud of the decision to present the Award to LAC because she had been involved in its formation prior to independence. LAC had helped people when they were persecuted or imprisoned by apartheid and was now helping Namibian society to cope with the legacy of apartheid.

267. The President said that the Award would be presented during the annual session in June. She added that it was important for the Board to promote the Award more widely next year and to have information about the Award disseminated as soon as possible so that countries could promote the candidacies of worthy organizations like LAC. (See the annex, decision 1997/12, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

F. Other matters

Informal consultation on the UNICEF headquarters financial management system

268. During the session, the Executive Board and secretariat held an informal consultation to discuss the UNICEF headquarters financial management system. Prior to suspending the formal meeting for the consultation, the President reminded delegations that although it was the prerogative of the Executive Director to make the final decision on the issue and no decision by the Board was required, many delegations had requested the opportunity to discuss the very complex process and raise questions with the secretariat.

269. During the informal discussion, many delegations expressed support for the directions taken by the Executive Director, while others raised questions for further elaboration. One delegation specifically stated that IMIS should be the standard for the United Nations system as a whole and that all agencies with field operations, including UNICEF, should have the same integrated financial system. The speaker referred to reports issued by the Joint Inspection Unit, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Secretary-General in support of this opinion. The delegation regretted that in the context of United Nations reform, UNICEF had chosen to follow an "independent and unknown path".

270. The same delegation said there was no reason for members of the United Nations family to have different accounting or personnel management requirements, which would lead to different reporting systems, limit transparency and provide inconsistent information to Member States. The document submitted informally by the secretariat did not refer to maintenance costs, a very important point. Based on these points, it would have been possible to request an independent evaluation on the comparative advantages of IMIS and other systems, but this would have been too costly. The delegation therefore requested close monitoring of the financial system project, with regular updates and consultation, and review by the Board of Auditors and the Executive Board and that in future, the secretariat should coordinate all information technology activities to avoid duplication.

271. Another delegation congratulated UNICEF on its decision to acquire an internationally recognized financial management package and to enter into a sound business relationship with a highly regarded private sector service provider. That decision would ensure that the financial management capabilities of UNICEF kept pace with the latest international developments. The delegation noted the thoroughness of the UNICEF evaluation and selection process and expressed doubts as to the usefulness and adequacy of UNIMIS for the United Nations system as a whole. In particular, UNIMIS did not seem well suited to the complex needs of UNICEF, which included incorporating GCO and supporting the new Programme Manager System. The delegation hoped that a successful experience by UNICEF in this endeavour would serve as an example to other members of the United Nations system.

Executive Board programme of work

272. A number of delegations suggested that in future, it might not be necessary to have a regular session in March, and they requested that the Board consider this possibility when examining its programme of work for 1998.

273. A delegation suggested that at the annual session, the Board should consider the Secretary-General's report on improving internal oversight, as the General Assembly would be discussing the report in the fall. Another delegation said that the Board had discussed the draft report extensively at two sessions in 1996 in order to provide input to the final report. To discuss the report again would be a duplication of work.

Tribute to Hala Kittani

274. Both the Executive Director and the President paid tribute to Hala Kittani, Assistant Secretary of the Executive Board, who was leaving that position after 12 years to take up new responsibilities in the Office of United Nations Affairs and External Relations. The Executive Director said that during her tenure as Assistant Secretary, Mrs. Kittani had been closely involved in the management of relations between the Executive Board and the secretariat, an area to which she was especially suited because of her well-known linguistic and diplomatic skills.

G. Closing of the session

275. The Executive Director and President thanked delegations for their participation and the session was closed.

Part three

1997 ANNUAL SESSION

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 2 to 6 June 1997

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director

276. In her opening remarks, the President stressed that Board actions should lead to the strengthening of UNICEF in its efforts to respond to the needs of people. UNICEF was recognized in many parts of the world as the only hope not only for survival, but also for the development of human potential. UNICEF was working with the children of today who would form the families of tomorrow, and its mission should be to make thought and action truly cooperative.

277. She spoke about several important issues before the Board, including the allocation of general resources, which had been the subject of considerable discussion prior to the session. She also mentioned the recent meetings of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education (JCE) and of the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP). She stressed the importance of looking beyond preventive actions to making investments in people in order to provide them with the tools to make their own decisions and to make actions sustainable.

278. In welcoming delegations to the session, the Executive Director dispensed with the usual format of her opening remarks to focus on "a single issue that is of overarching importance for all aspects of UNICEF work" - United Nations reform. She spoke about the strong support of UNICEF for, as well as her personal commitment to, the current reform process. The most obvious evidence of the organization's commitment to the goals of reform was the Management Excellence Programme (MEP), which was helping UNICEF to create a new internal management culture that reflected enhanced standards of performance and accountability. This, she continued, had made it possible for UNICEF to coordinate its work more effectively with other parts of the United Nations system for greater coherence in planning, programming and implementation. In this process, the secretariat was guided by the belief that its strongest support should go to reforms that enhance the capacity of UNICEF to promote the protection of children's rights and to work for the survival and full development of children.

279. Until now, UNICEF had participated in the reform groups focusing on the Track One proposals which aim at reducing administrative costs, streamlining Secretariat functions and, of greatest relevance to UNICEF, better integrating United Nations activities at the country level. The Executive Director detailed the position of UNICEF with regard to those proposals, noting that Track One was proceeding at a good pace, with all outstanding matters well on the way to resolution.

280. She said that the Secretary-General would announce the Track Two initiatives around mid-July and that UNICEF would help to advance these more far-reaching reforms. Although the details of the proposals were still being developed, she shared her views on the nature of these broader reform proposals. The two key areas of reform currently under discussion with direct relevance to UNICEF were development operations and humanitarian affairs.

281. On the issue of development operations, she mentioned several areas of concern to UNICEF, in particular what happens in the field and the suggestion to consolidate several existing Executive Boards into a single Board. In order to carry out its mandate, UNICEF must be able to continue its country programmes, which means working in partnership with Governments and civil society, with collaborative input from the United Nations system. UNICEF representatives who

are answerable to the Executive Director must remain responsible for the development and implementation of country programmes. She acknowledged the good working relationship between the UNICEF secretariat and its Executive Board as it is presently constituted and hoped that the same degree of specialized knowledge, support and non-political dialogue would be maintained in any future structure. Within any collaborative and coordinated framework, it was vital that UNICEF retain its capacity and authority to speak directly for children everywhere, to develop and implement discrete country programmes under Board guidance and to carry out its own fund-raising.

282. With regard to humanitarian affairs, she spoke about the option of creating a new humanitarian affairs agency into which the agencies handling emergencies would be consolidated. This would include UNICEF, the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and, possibly, the World Food Programme (WFP). In this scenario, UNHCR would effectively become the United Nations humanitarian organization, with wider powers than it presently has. She said that UNICEF must ensure that all aspects of the care and protection of children remain high on the humanitarian agenda, and that UNICEF, with its special developmental perspective, continue to be recognized as the leading advocate of a "first call for children".

283. She raised the following issues for delegations to bear in mind when considering the Track Two reform proposals: what effect would they have on the nature and role of UNICEF; how would they work in detail; would they improve operations in the field; would they help to mobilize additional resources for basic social services; would they improve governance; and how would they serve the rights and needs of children.

284. In closing, she recalled 37 years ago when Henry Labouisse accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for UNICEF and told his audience in Oslo that the most important meaning of the Prize was "the solemn recognition that the welfare of today's children is inseparably linked with the peace of tomorrow's world". "The truth of that observation has not changed", she said, "nor has UNICEF's central and leading role as a strong and independent voice for children the world over". (See E/ICEF/1997/CRP.14 for the full text of her statement.)

285. The Executive Director's statement generated considerable interest among delegations, many of whom commented on the subject at various times throughout the session. They welcomed her candid and comprehensive presentation and affirmed the importance of United Nations reform. They also stressed the need for UNICEF to participate fully in the process. It was generally agreed that the approach taken by UNICEF was constructive and appropriate. In this connection, mention was made of the internal management excellence process currently being undertaken by UNICEF, which put it in a place to be a leader in United Nations reform. Some delegations said that the reform process should preserve the advantages and services of agencies so that they can better carry out their functions and stressed the importance of UNICEF maintaining its separate identity - within a strengthened United Nations framework - as the agency working for the survival, development and protection of children. The reform process, it was felt, should serve to enhance UNICEF capacity. Speakers expressed appreciation for UNICEF support for the Track One proposals, but said that the Track Two proposals would need to be addressed in a broader context at the appropriate time, perhaps at the third regular session in September.

B. Adoption of the agenda

286. The agenda of the session, as contained in document E/ICEF/1997/13 and Corr.1, was adopted. The agenda contained the following items:

Item 1: Opening of the session: statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director

Item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work

Item 3: Report of the Executive Director (Part II)

Item 4: Follow-up to the World Summit for Children

Item 5: Implementation of UNICEF policies and strategies on children in need of special protection measures

Item 6: Ensuring children's rights to survival, development and protection in Africa

Item 7: Oral report on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa

Item 8: Report on the allocation of general resources

Item 9: Outline of UNICEF information and publication policy

Item 10: Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO):

  (a) GCO work plan and proposed budget for 1997

  (b) GCO financial report and statements for the year ended 30 April 1996

Item 11: Reports on the meetings of the UNESCO/UNICEF JCE and the UNICEF/WHO JCHP (to be reconstituted as the WHO/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Coordinating Committee on Health)

Item 12: Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF

Item 13: Field visit of Executive Board members

Item 14: Other matters

Item 15: Closing of the session: remarks by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board

287. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 69 observer delegations had submitted credentials for the session.

288. In addition, 5 United Nations bodies, 2 specialized agencies, 13 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 4 National Committees for UNICEF and Palestine had submitted credentials.

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Report of the Executive Director (Part II)

289. The Executive Director introduced her annual report (E/ICEF/1997/10 (Part II)), recalling that it had been shared with delegations prior to the present session to provide them with sufficient time for analysis and comments. She pointed out that in the preparation of the report, the secretariat had tried to be concise, to avoid repetition and to cross-reference with relevant documents.

290. Numerous speakers expressed appreciation for the report and for the continued commitment and work carried out by UNICEF in 1996. Several delegations commented positively on the improved format and content of the report, especially its more developed analytical approach, while others encouraged UNICEF to enhance even further the analytical aspect of the report. One delegation suggested that the report focus on the impact of UNICEF activities and on the constraints faced, while also looking at the future direction and long-term strategies of the organization. Two delegations expressed the wish to see clearer links between global trends and priority programmatic interventions aimed at meeting the needs of children and women and ensuring the realization of their rights. One speaker said that there was no mention of UNICEF work in the Pacific region.

291. Strong support was expressed for the focus on poverty reduction, especially in view of the trend of decreasing aid, and UNICEF was urged to collaborate closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on this process. Several delegations commented on the negative effects of structural adjustment programmes, globalization and liberalization on the economies of low-income countries and on the resultant difficulties experienced in trying to improve the situation of women and children. UNICEF was requested to better clarify its position in relation to the issue of the impact of structural adjustment. It was important that efficiency was not achieved at the expense of equity. The Executive Director said that UNICEF strongly supported economic reform with the hope is that it would ultimately lead to more equity. What was of great concern to UNICEF was not only increasing poverty, but also increasing disparities.

292. Stressing that the 20/20 Initiative should get high priority, one delegation reported on preparatory activities for a follow-up meeting on the Initiative as agreed at the 1996 Oslo Conference. The full involvement of UNICEF as well as of other United Nations agencies and the World Bank was strongly encouraged by a number of delegations. More information on the subject would be made available at the next Board session in September. The secretariat said that UNICEF had been actively supporting the Initiative and was fully involved in efforts for the follow-up meeting.

293. While expressing their appreciation for the accomplishments highlighted in the mid-term report on the achievement of the World Summit for Children goals, several delegations said that much remained to be done to ensure the survival, development and protection of children. UNICEF was encouraged to increase its focus on protection from abuse, exploitation, family separation and disabilities. Another delegation stressed the need to devote scarce available resources to the countries most in need.

294. Several delegations emphasized the need for a stronger focus on strengthening data and monitoring systems. In view of the need to increase countries' capabilities to collect reliable data, information was requested on present and foreseen future needs and plans in the improvement of country

databases to achieve comparability of data. One delegation stressed the importance of monitoring capacity-building efforts. The Executive Director said that UNICEF was committed to continue strengthening capacity-building at the institutional level and developing crucial data collection and analysis capability among appropriate national agencies charged with monitoring and collecting data on achievement of the goals. Several delegations requested additional information on the ways in which UNICEF was facilitating community participation and capacity-building for self-reliance and sustainability, and they looked forward to the report being prepared to document best practices and lessons learned in community participation and empowerment as mentioned in paragraph 69 of the document.

295. A number of delegations said that UNICEF should increase attention to the problems associated with growing urbanization and its impact on poverty and on the urban deprived child. One delegation said that the issue had not been addressed in the report in all its complexity, especially in relation to Africa and to its components of violence, prostitution, etc. Another delegation requested additional information on how UNICEF was developing its urban focus. One speaker said that development efforts should focus on rural areas from where people migrate in order to reduce urbanization. The Executive Director replied that UNICEF was not trying to do something different, but would review its programmatic interventions.

296. Several delegations expressed the view that coordination among agencies at all levels - particularly at field level - was essential to enhance operations, and the experience of Ghana was specifically mentioned. UNICEF was also encouraged to improve programme integration as well as the coordination of experts at country level. Another speaker stressed that coordination among Governments, bilaterals and multilaterals alike was necessary to enable national Governments to take the lead in planning and implementation. The importance of coordination in capacity-building and emergency operations were also mentioned. Several speakers requested additional information on the experience of UNICEF with the new country programme process and on coordination at country level as the report did not provide detailed information on these issues.

297. One delegation requested specific information on UNICEF strategies and programmes for combatting the problem of violence against children and women as this was not contained in the report.

298. Several delegations praised the organization's emphasis on the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the legal framework for its action to protect children, adding that the challenge now was to implement it through its programming. A clear strategy and programmatic guidelines that emphasized priority action to be taken in consultation with recipient countries were now required.

299. Several remarks were made about the distinction between a rights-based approach and a needs-based approach. One delegation said that the best way to act on children's rights was to meet their needs. While expressing support for the rights-based approach, two other speakers expressed concern that the rights-based approach could unintentionally be seen as opposed to the needs-based approach. Another speaker said that the two approaches were interlinked and requested that this reality be addressed in the future. With regard to the rights framework, the Deputy Director, Programme Division, said that the main responsibility in the implementation of the Convention rested with the countries that have ratified it and that UNICEF was only one of the players actively involved in supporting its implementation. The framework provided by the Convention did not require a change in the way country programmes work. In fact, she said, the triple A approach of assessment, analysis and action was highly applicable to the rights approach.

300. A number of delegations welcomed UNICEF partnership with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and encouraged UNICEF to increase its support to HIV/AIDS-related activities. It was observed that today AIDS represents the fastest growing cause of child deaths in Africa, negating achievements made in reducing child mortality and morbidity and presenting another challenging problem - the increasing number of orphans. One delegation stressed the importance of close coordination at country level between UNICEF and UNAIDS and requested information on the modalities of UNICEF support to UNAIDS. The Executive Director assured delegations that UNICEF would further strengthen its collaboration with UNAIDS and cited several examples of what UNICEF was doing presently, including working jointly with UNAIDS on a publication on youth and AIDS prevention.

301. All speakers addressing the issue of resource mobilization expressed great concern about the trends of increasing poverty and declining official development assistance and stressed the importance of maximizing the use of resources. Efforts needed to be made to mobilize resources from all sources using creative methods in order to be able to support implementation of agreed programmes. The UNICEF commitment to eliminate poverty had to include an attack on the root causes of poverty, which had to be taken into account in the allocation of resources. One delegation remarked about the impact of reduced funding on emergency interventions as well. As a result, it was imperative for UNICEF to focus on the countries most in need and on the children most at risk. Another delegation highlighted the need to give special attention to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States in view of the delicate process of transition they are experiencing. Several speakers requested information on what UNICEF was doing to mobilize new and additional resources, including from non-traditional donors, stating that this information was not included in the report. The Executive Director said that UNICEF was committed to making the best possible use of its resources and was actively looking for alternative sources. In the meantime, the possibility to roll over funds would ensure that they were not lost. There had been an increase in private funding and fund-raising activities were also taking place in countries in which there are UNICEF programmes.

302. One delegation commented on the initiative being undertaken by UNICEF to mobilize increased general resources by working with donors to identify contributions that could be allocated to general resources instead of supplementary funds when the special information and reporting needs of the donors could be met, as described in paragraph 116 of the document. The same speaker requested the secretariat to comment on the apparent trend of declining supplies and equipment and cash assistance and increasing programme support services as revealed in table 3 of the document. In response, the Executive Director explained that there had been a moderate increase in general resources. It was the secretariat's intention to report more accurately on the use of general resources and, therefore, encourage donors not to earmark their funds. She said that the apparent increase in programme support services was caused by the integration of the global funds (which no longer exist) into that category and that, in fact, there had not been an increase. She added that Board members would have a more accurate breakdown of expenditures in the next integrated budget presentation.

303. One delegation mentioned the increased contributions from NGOs and the private sector as a critical reason for UNICEF to stress its ties with NGOs. He also underlined the need to address how these contributions are utilized in the next report.

304. While a number of delegations praised the collaborative efforts between UNICEF and WHO in the area of immunization, several others expressed their concern about the unavailability and unaffordability of some of the new and improved vaccines for developing countries. One delegation specifically requested UNICEF to clarify how the agency was going to address the issue of equal access to vaccines. Another delegation pointed out the weaknesses of developing countries in the production of the new vaccines and requested assistance in creating a regional centre for vaccine production. The Executive Director said that UNICEF shared the concern expressed by some delegations on the issue of access to new and improved vaccines. UNICEF and WHO were trying to call attention to this issue and to develop strategies to support countries that were unable to afford the new vaccines.

305. Several delegations stressed the need to analyse the issue of nutrition and household food security more in depth and to increase interventions in view of the slow progress recorded. The importance of an intersectoral approach to UNICEF interventions in the area of nutrition was stressed. Another delegation requested information on follow-up to the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition, which was not contained in the report. In response, the Chief, Nutrition Section, reported on follow-up to the conference organized by WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, noting that the conference had endorsed all nutrition-related goals agreed at the World Summit for Children and the method of tackling nutrition problems that UNICEF had articulated in its nutrition policy adopted by the Board in 1990. That nutrition strategy, he added, had served well in the 25 countries that had been able to implement it.

306. One delegation expressed appreciation for the focus on maternal mortality, and stressed the special role that UNICEF regional offices could play in support of this effort. The same speaker pointed out the contradiction between national statistics and official statistics and expressed the need to eliminate this discrepancy. Another speaker requested clarification of the status of maternal mortality among the priority areas of UNICEF interventions. The Executive Director expressed the serious commitment of UNICEF to both nutrition and maternal mortality - two areas that show negative trends. With regard to the latter, she said that UNICEF was in the process of discussing with WHO the necessary steps to be taken to increase action on this issue. In addition, the two organizations were in the process of producing revised guidelines on maternal mortality reduction.

307. One delegation said that UNICEF action in the development and protection of children should be preventive in nature, with another speaker adding that UNICEF work with children in difficult circumstances should also focus on rehabilitation. The importance of a particular focus on mainstreaming action for children with disabilities and children in armed conflict was also raised. In response to a query about future UNICEF interventions in child labour and its collaborative work with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Executive Director said that UNICEF had signed a Memorandum of Understanding - stressing a coordinated approach - with ILO, and was looking forward to the Oslo Conference.

308. Appreciation was expressed for the key focus placed by UNICEF on education, and girls education in particular. Commenting on the educational value of audio-visual programmes such as "Meena", one delegation asked that the programme be made available to other regions. In addition to strengthening its efforts towards basic education, UNICEF was also urged to place a special emphasis on girl school drop-outs.

B. Follow-up to the World Summit for Children

309. Delegations commented on several other programme areas. The importance of a continued focus on universal access to improved hygiene practices and sanitation was stressed by some speakers. In response to a comment about the impact of malaria on child mortality and morbidity in Africa, the Executive Director said that although malaria was not included as one of the World Summit goals, UNICEF was convinced of the need to be involved in malaria control efforts. She added that a report on this important issue was contemplated. Two delegations expressed their support for the organization's continuing efforts in mainstreaming a gender-sensitive approach to programming. Human rights abuses against women in one country were mentioned, and the secretariat was requested to clarify the role of UNICEF in combatting such abuses. One delegation requested more information on UNICEF efforts to alleviate the impact of sanctions on children.

310. The Executive Board had before it the progress report on follow-up to the World Summit for Children (E/ICEF/1997/14 and Corr.1 and Corr.2), which was introduced by the Director, Division of Evaluation, Policy and Planning.

311. Many delegations welcomed the document, stating that it was informative and concise. Most speakers were encouraged by progress in immunization coverage, in eradicating polio and dracunculiasis and in increasing recognition of children's rights. UNICEF was commended for its persistent efforts and hard work in contributing to the progress achieved. A few speakers stressed the importance of national capacity-building to sustain progress.

312. Concern was expressed by many delegations about the lack of significant progress in the areas of maternal mortality, child malnutrition, basic education, and water and sanitation. It was felt that increasing attention should be paid to those areas. A few speakers suggested that UNICEF should prioritize its programmes in the remaining years, and several other speakers encouraged UNICEF to develop strategies on which to base the preparation of practical programmes. Basic education, especially quality and gender balance, was a concern of several delegations, which stressed that it should be a priority. Two delegations emphasized the importance of the community approach and of the role of families in meeting the remaining challenges and said that UNICEF should mobilize to empower families, parents and care-givers. One delegation recommended that UNICEF should consider extending time-frame for some of the World Summit for Children goals beyond the year 2000.

313. Two delegations encouraged UNICEF to develop a vision and a future direction beyond the year 2000. Another delegation raised questions about how UNICEF would programme the transitions beyond the year 2000, how it would work with Governments to integrate national programmes of action (NPAs) for children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and how it would link World Summit goals with children's rights. One speaker requested further clarification on the complementarity between the Convention and the World Summit goals. In response, the Director said that the World Summit goals were time-bound benchmarks and children's rights were time-less goals. NPAs could play an important role in promoting children's rights when developed in the framework of the Convention as a comprehensive national strategy to promote and protect the rights of the child.

314. One speaker requested clarification on why no specific goals on child rights, such as child labour, were included in the report. Another speaker suggested that in the future, the progress report should include more specific references to areas related to the protection of children in situations of child labour, sexual exploitation and disability. Another delegation commented that

the resolution did not fully reflect on the violation of children's rights and should be revised for that purpose. The Director replied that the report had focused mainly on the end-decade goals and not specifically on child protection issues. The complementarity of the World Summit and the Convention and the close relationship between the achievement of the goals and the realization of child rights would undoubtedly contribute to the consideration of all areas of relevance for the life of all children, including special protection measures for particularly vulnerable groups of children.

315. UNICEF was advised by several speakers to support the Committee on the Rights of the Child more strongly, including with a view to ensuring that Committee membership be enlarged given the wide ratification of the Convention and the increasing workload faced by the Committee. The Director said that UNICEF strongly supported the Committee in its monitoring and advocacy functions. She also recommended that Governments support the General Assembly resolution to enlarge the Committee's membership from 10 to 18.

316. A few delegations stressed the importance of monitoring and evaluation, and suggested that UNICEF should measure progress, sum up experience and evaluate lessons learned. The mid-decade review, it was felt, provided a good opportunity to reflect on lessons learned, and one speaker said that one of the lessons learned from the review was that time-bound goals were important factors in helping to shape programmes. Another delegation wanted to know how UNICEF prioritized its work and what lessons had been learned, especially in the areas of maternal mortality, basic education and child malnutrition. A few speakers said that UNICEF should support the preparation of the end-decade review in 2001. Two speakers stressed the importance of developing child rights indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Several other speakers said that the effectiveness and efficiency of the multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS) methodology should be reviewed for its possible use in monitoring the end-decade goals. The Director replied that the secretariat was aware of the need for systematic data collection on children. Some indicators had been developed and steps were being taken to identify child rights indicators. UNICEF fully supported Governments' efforts in developing additional local indicators to adjust to specific national realities. She also informed delegations that an evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the MICS methodology was currently under way.

317. A few delegations emphasized the importance of partnerships, adding that the World Summit goals would not be achieved until and unless UNICEF worked closely with other partners. One speaker expressed an interest in learning how other agencies were contributing to the World Summit goals. (See the annex, decision 1997/20, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

C. Implementation of UNICEF policies and strategies on children in need of special protection measures

318. The report on "Children in need of special protection measures: report on steps for policy implementation" (E/ICEF/1997/16) was presented by the Deputy Director, Programme Division. It was prepared as a companion paper to the 1996 policy review of UNICEF policies and strategies on child protection (E/ICEF/1996/14) in response to Executive Board decision 1996/27 (E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1), and provides a programming framework for the incorporation of special protection concerns within country programmes.

319. A large number of delegations intervened on this agenda item. There was general support for the approach and implementation plan presented in the report. Several delegations welcomed the two-pronged strategy of prevention and targeted responses. The concept of technical support networks was also endorsed

by a number of delegations. In this connection, delegations stressed the importance of collaboration with NGOs and called for a further strengthening of UNICEF ties with strategic NGO partner organizations. Collaboration with other relevant United Nations agencies was also highlighted by delegations. A general concern expressed during the debate was the importance of mainstreaming of protection concerns throughout UNICEF programmes of cooperation, along with a genuine concern related to the appropriate allocation of general resources to ensure programme responses that addressed the needs and rights of children in situations of exploitation, abuse or neglect.

320. The complexities surrounding special protection issues were touched upon by several delegations which called for further clarification and analysis with regard to definitions and the various contexts requiring special protection measures. A clearer understanding and information on the scope and type of concrete UNICEF interventions in these areas would be welcomed. Delegations called for very clear information on the roles of the various agencies and the comparative advantage of UNICEF in this regard.

321. With regard to specific child protection issues, several delegations highlighted the importance of UNICEF involvement in activities addressing childhood disability, sexual abuse and exploitation, child labour, the impact of armed conflict on children and juvenile justice. There was a general request for more information on UNICEF activities in these areas. To this end, a number of delegations requested that the secretariat present a progress report on policy implementation at the 1998 annual session of the Executive Board which would emphasize mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation, and relevant indicators, and report on concrete activities at the country level. (See the annex, decision 1997/21, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

D. Ensuring children's rights to survival, development and protection in Africa

322. The Executive Board had before it a progress report on "Ensuring children's rights to survival, development and protection in Africa" (E/ICEF/1997/15), which was introduced by the Director, Programme Division.

323. Many delegations expressed continued support for the work being done by UNICEF in Africa and for the priority accorded to sub-Saharan Africa. Several speakers referred to the progress in Africa noted by the Secretary-General in his report on the mid-decade review of the goals of the World Summit and to the need for continued attention to such areas as health and nutrition, education, water supply and sanitation, as well as gender disparity, malaria, HIV/AIDS and protection of the most vulnerable children. A number of speakers stressed the need for increased resources for development in Africa and for measures to relieve the burden of external debt, which hampered the achievement of the goals for children in many countries. Other speakers referred to the continued importance of the 20/20 Initiative as a means of helping countries to channel available resources. A delegation from the region said that African Governments should provide clear and positive indications of their efforts to increase investments in the social sector, move ahead with decentralization and to establish policies for cost-sharing for sustainability.

324. Some delegations said that the report should have provided more analysis on how UNICEF had responded to the needs of children in Africa and about the focus for the future. A group of countries said that there should have been more analysis of the success of the strategies of service delivery, capacity-building and empowerment, and a better presentation of trends and facts. They said that the report did not include analysis as to whether the

activities described were the best use of available resources and whether UNICEF programmes in Africa were cost-effective and effective. More comparison between countries would have allowed the Executive Board to understand why some countries were making progress in the achievement of goals and others were not. The report was weak in presenting and discussing priorities and did not provide sufficient information about how UNICEF and African countries planned to reach the World Summit goals in view of the problems that had been noted.

325. A delegation expressed concerned about the breadth of the UNICEF portfolio in Africa and asked how scarce UNICEF resources could be managed to reach so many competing priorities. It was not clear from the report what UNICEF was doing to support countries that were not on track to achieve the World Summit goals. The delegation would have liked to see more information on programme direction and strategies and asked whether the structure of field offices was being reviewed to provide needed technical support in priority areas. Another delegation asked about the implications of changes in staff strength in Africa. The first speaker said that it would also be useful to analyse how country offices dealt with the competing priorities of the World Summit in the country programme planning process. The same delegation asked about the disparity in fund-raising between the two African regions, especially for education and water and sanitation.

326. Another delegation said that poverty was the main cause of the problems facing African children and that greater efforts towards its eradication would reduce the number of emergencies on the continent. In assessing progress towards the World Summit goals, UNICEF should identify and analyse trends in such indicators as maternal mortality, literacy and diseases caused by poverty. The progress report should have contained more detail on how the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UNICEF mission statement could be used to improve the conditions of African children, as well as information on future plans to prevent sexual exploitation. The delegation requested more information on Operation Lifeline Sudan, the lessons learned from that experience and how that knowledge had been fed back into programme management.

327. A speaker expressed strong support for the UNICEF anti-war agenda, and, where necessary, UNICEF involvement in humanitarian assistance. Another speaker said that children needed special protection from economic and sexual exploitation and recruitment into armies.

328. A delegation said that the Bamako Initiative and the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative had helped countries to revitalize health services. Other speakers said that improvements in girls' education led directly to the improved well-being of women, and that UNICEF should take the lead in advocacy on behalf of women since their education and access to income have a direct impact of children, especially girls.

329. Several delegations said that urbanization was increasingly a problem that had an impact on the situation of children and should be reflected in future UNICEF programmes.

330. Referring to paragraph 57 of the report, which stated that UNICEF was at risk of losing its comparative advantage in the water sector, a speaker requested more information about the impact on UNICEF programmes. A group of countries found that the explanation for under-funding in the water and sanitation sector was inadequate.

331. In a brief response, the secretariat stressed that health and education were priorities for UNICEF in Africa. The continent was not a homogenous entity, and each country programme was based on a situation analyses in order to

focus on specific problems. However, health and education were general priorities, and in almost every country office, there were specialized staff working in those areas. Given its limited resources and the enormity of the problems facing children in Africa, UNICEF continually worked to leverage the resources of other donors and Governments. UNICEF was aware of the disparities in supplementary funding between the two African regions and was working to compensate for the shortfalls in West and Central Africa and to increase leveraging of funds. (See the annex, decision 1997/19, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

E. United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa

332. Presenting an oral report on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, the Director, Programme Division, said that UNICEF was fully committed to its implementation. UNICEF saw the Special Initiative as an important means to strengthen the capacities of African Governments to frame their own priorities and was concentrating on policy-related and country-level activities. The country programme approach was in line with the mechanisms of the Special Initiative, and UNICEF was working with many partners, including bilateral development agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions in the elaboration of sectoral investment programmes (SIPs). SIPs had been established in a number of countries in different areas, e.g. in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi and Mozambique for both health and education, in Zambia for health and in the Comoros for education. UNICEF was also working within the framework of different regional structures with, for example, WHO and the World Bank in health and with UNESCO, the World Bank and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa in education. All UNICEF representatives in Africa had received guidelines to assist them in implementing the provisions of the Special Initiative.

333. Several speakers said that the Special Initiative was a means of promoting better coordination within the United Nations system for sustainable development which would enable countries to identify their own priorities and pursue responses to their own needs. It was suggested that UNICEF should play a more active role in coordinating the involvement of other agencies in favour of children because of its extensive country-level presence. The importance given to ownership by Governments was appreciated, but a speaker said that the resources to be mobilized by the Special Initiative over 10 years were inadequate to deal with the continent's problems.

334. A group of countries said that although the Special Initiative had some positive effects, in some areas its impact had been limited or unknown. Africa would need a high level of development input over the next few years, and coordination was needed between the various initiatives that had been launched in Africa. The United Nations New Agenda for Development in Africa had not had any real impact, and the Special Initiative would have to demonstrate its capacity to bring added value. The speaker requested an explanation of the role of SIPs in the Special Initiative and welcomed closer collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions. Another delegation requested that instructions for closer collaboration with WFP be included in future directives to field offices on the Special Initiative. In the next progress report on Africa, UNICEF should provide more specific information about how the Special Initiative was being implemented in the field.

F. Report on the allocation of general resources

335. The Executive Board had before it the report on the allocation of general resources (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.17 and Corr.1). In introducing the document, the Director, Programme Division, explained that the modified system retained the

three core criteria and refined their weighting so that countries with low gross national product (GNP) per capita and a high under-five mortality rate (U5MR) received higher priority. He also explained that 93 per cent of the general resources available for programmes was allocated directly to the country level, while 7 per cent was set aside for flexibility to evolving needs and other special circumstances. He further briefly explained the five major steps of the modified allocation system. He thanked the Board, especially the Vice-President charged with overseeing the negotiations on the draft recommendation, for the useful informal meetings and consultations that contributed greatly to the development and finalization of the proposed modified system.

336. The Vice-President explained that in response to the agreement reached at the February 1997 inter-sessional meeting of the Board, he had organized several informal meetings and consultations with the secretariat and several members of the Board to arrive at a consensus and to develop a draft recommendation. He emphasized the need to arrive at a consensus at the present session.

337. Many delegations expressed appreciation for the very high quality of the paper and thanked the Director, Programme Division, and the Vice-President for their excellent work. Most delegations welcomed the priority given to countries most in need, specifically, the least developed and low-income countries. Some donor delegations confirmed that this was in accordance with the policy of their countries to give priority to the alleviation of poverty. A few delegations commented that the resource allocation system should be poverty-oriented. It should contribute to poverty alleviation in least developed countries (LDCs) and in sub-Saharan Africa.

338. Several delegations indicated that the share of LDCs, low-income countries and countries in sub-Saharan Africa should be increased substantially. A few delegations encouraged that the goal should be to allocate at least 60 per cent of general resources to LDCs and 50 per cent to sub-Saharan Africa. Some delegations expressed concern about the negative effect of placing emphasis on regional shares and targeted shares for regions and groupings as they affect the transparency of the application of the general resources allocation system.

339. Some delegations expressed concern about regional imbalances in the modification of the allocation system. One delegation indicated that under the modified system, the allocation to Asia would decrease, while most poor children live in South Asia. One delegation said that the regional percentage did not reflect the diversity and complexity of country situations. In response, the Director, Programme Division pointed out that within each region, there would be countries receiving more general resources and countries receiving less. In South Asia, most countries would receive higher allocation shares under the modified system because their per capita GNP was relatively low and their U5MR was relatively high compared to other countries.

340. A number of delegations supported the 7 per cent of general resources set aside to respond to evolving needs and special circumstances. Some of them requested that criteria and guidelines should be worked out further for the allocation of the set-aside to ensure transparency and that its use be reported in the Executive Director's report.

341. Many delegations supported the continued use of the three criteria, per capita GNP, U5MR and child population. Two speakers suggested that other criteria should also be considered, such as child malnutrition, the maternal mortality rate, countries in transition, and the absorptive capacity of recipient Governments. Several other speakers expressed the view that child population was not a good criteria for resource allocation.

342. Several delegations supported the level of minimum allocation of $625,000, while two others said that it was too high. Still other speakers found it difficult to understand the concept and its relationship with the principle of universality. In response to a query about how the minimum allocation would be used, the Director, Programme Division, explained that the minimum allocation was fixed as an affordable level to allow a viable country programme. He also explained that minimum allocation would be a direct input for specific programmes and projects and did not cover programme support. He further emphasized that the rationale for the minimum allocation did not specifically stem from the principle of universality, but from the practical concern of a viable country programme.

343. Several delegations expressed concern about the declining level of general resources, which would greatly affect implementation of approved country programmes for children. In this connection, one speaker suggested that the decline of general resources should not affect LDCs. UNICEF was urged to raise more funds for general resources and donor countries to increase their general resources contributions to UNICEF. One delegation requested UNICEF to report to the Board on its fund-raising policy and strategy.

344. Two delegations expressed their concern with the graduation concept, stating that it would limit UNICEF work in many countries and jeopardize partnerships. One speaker said that the income threshold for graduation was too low in comparison with that of UNDP, with another speaker adding that the UNDP resource allocation profile for Africa was more satisfactory. Another speaker said that the needs of countries at an early development stage should be sufficiently considered. One speaker stressed that any measures taken in a country needed to be agreed by both the Government and UNICEF. In response, the Director, Programme Division, explained that the graduation threshold was a combination of GNP per capita at $2,895 and U5MR at 30 per 1,000 live births. This combined threshold was more demanding than the UNDP threshold of GNP per capita at $4,000. He also emphasized that U5MR was a good summary indicator of the level of development and not solely of the well-being of children.

345. One speaker said that child development should be put into the macro-social and economic context. The importance of sustainability and national capacity-building was stressed by another speaker.

346. A few delegations said that UNICEF should start to implement the new system, then evaluate its effectiveness and revise it when needed. It was suggested by another speaker that the new system should be applied only to those new programmes, not to those that were approved earlier. Another delegation commented that 2003 was too far away to assess the implementation of the new system. Moreover, an assessment of implementation should consider the outcome of the 2001 end-decade review of the World Summit goals.

347. Prior to the adoption of the decision, one Board member reiterated the view that the allocation of general resources should take into account circumstances not reflected by a country's U5MR and GNP. He understood that any likely difficulties caused by the implication of the decision to phase out general resources in a country would be brought to the attention of the Executive Director as specified in paragraph 7 of the decision and paragraph 5 (c) of the annex to the decision. His delegation further understood that the phasing out of countries satisfying the graduation level would be applied gradually in consultation with the Governments concerned. The cooperation and partnership with UNICEF had been instrumental in many countries' progress, which should not be threatened. (See the annex, decision 1997/18, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

G. Outline of UNICEF information and publication policy

348. The Executive Director introduced the report on "UNICEF information and publications policy" (E/ICEF/1997/17), and the Director, Division of Communication (DOC), summarized its contents. He also reported on efforts to consolidate UNICEF publications and coordinate them through the new mechanism of the Publications Review Committee and on mechanisms to coordinate publications within the wider United Nations system. He informed delegations about a number of initiatives taken by DOC with regard to UNICEF on the Internet. The secretariat was seeking guidance on the form, scope and timing of the broader information and publication policy to be presented to the Executive Board at a future session.

349. Most delegations commended the paper as a good interim report on UNICEF information and publication activities, but several delegations expressed the need for a more elaborate communication policy framework at a later date. One delegation noted that the current report provided background information on UNICEF publications without mapping out any policy direction or clearly defining the role of the communication function at global, regional and country levels. Another delegation stressed that without a policy framework, there was a danger of wasting resources. One delegation recommended that the policy paper identify priority areas and provide a strategy for implementation. In response to a suggestion by the Executive Director, it was agreed to defer presentation of a more detailed paper until the 1998 annual Board session.

350. The Director responded to queries regarding the publication budget for the Progress of Nations, The State of the World's Children report and the UNICEF Annual Report. One delegation welcomed the measures being taken to reduce costs, and another asked to what extent work was being outsourced to external contractors. Several delegations suggested that UNICEF information be better defined in relation to target audiences (donors/recipients/the general public). Several speakers stressed the need to monitor and evaluate the impact of UNICEF publications and suggested that the secretariat undertake cost-benefit studies to enable the organization to target its audiences more effectively. The Director said that UNICEF communication activities were decentralized to enable field offices and National Committees to target their own audiences more effectively and evaluate the impact of the materials. With regard to evaluation, he noted that UNICEF was trying to enhance evaluation capacity at the country level by organizing training workshops on audience research.

351. One delegation enquired about the benefits of the recent restructuring of the division and whether it was now a more efficient operation. The Director said that the consolidation of the communication function had resulted in greater consistency in the projection of the UNICEF image; eliminated the duplication of activities, thus saving both posts and funds; and greatly enhanced internal cohesion.

352. Several delegations welcomed the organization's Internet initiatives. One delegation mentioned the need for more specific audience targeting in this connection and encouraged the secretariat to continue to produce Internet materials in French and Spanish. One delegation stressed the importance of the Internet as a means of communication between UNICEF and National Committees, and the need for collaboration to produce Web sites for the general public. In response, the Director said that the medium was still evolving and that currently the Internet audience was limited, but would clearly grow.

H. Greeting Card and related Operations

353. The Executive Board had before it the GCO work plan and proposed budget for the eight-month period 1 May to 31 December 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.8) and the GCO financial report and statements for the year ended 30 April 1996 (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.9).

354. The Director, GCO, made a presentation on GCO performance in the past year and its key strategies for 1997 as well as on initiatives affecting 1997 and beyond. The presentation outlined the new steps that have been taken by GCO following the recommendations of the Coopers and Lybrand study, including the introduction of the "New Look" greeting card line and brochure.

355. GCO initiatives in 1997 included the expansion of the "New Look" card line and brochures to additional markets, condensing and harmonizing the product line, and shortening the product development and adoption process. The focus would be on key markets and implementation of the recommendations of the UNICEF field office task force. The roles of GCO and National Committees would be delineated and emphasis placed on the new partnership model with National Committees. During 1998, initiatives will include the consolidation of GCO headquarters in one location in Europe and integrated brand management of both cards and private sector fund-raising.

356. The Director was commended for his clear and transparent presentation and more concise and informative documentation with a market-oriented analysis. GCO was praised for implementing more efficient business processes and new initiatives to maximize income for UNICEF from the private sector.

357. Several speakers congratulated GCO on the income it produced for UNICEF in 1996 as well as the efforts of Member States which made the results possible. One speaker stressed the potential for further development of partnerships with the private sector to increase funds. Another delegation highlighted the fact that 10 out of 13 priority field offices had received government authorization to carry out private sector fund-raising in their countries and hoped that the other three countries would receive permission soon.

358. The importance of increased allocations of funds for general resources was stressed. It was noted that only a marginally higher percentage of private sector fund-raising income was allocated to general resources in 1996 than in 1995.

359. Regarding the focus on key markets, several speakers hoped this initiative would provide good potential for increasing revenues for UNICEF and were of the opinion that this was the correct direction for the future. However, one delegation expressed concern that markets that were currently performing well could suffer if they did not meet the criteria to be included in the key markets. This could lead not only to lower income generation, but also to weakened advocacy for UNICEF. The Director clarified that support for profitable markets would not be relinquished at the expense of increased emphasis on key markets.

360. Another speaker expressed concern that countries with large populations, but low per capita income where UNICEF card sales volume was low, would not meet key market criteria and proposed that GCO consider strategies such as selling designs reflecting local culture and at lower prices. Increased card sales would also improve advocacy in the region. The Director replied that if the new business strategies currently being implemented, which included the option of regional designs, did not produce sufficient results over the next two to three years, more regional strategies could be considered.

361. On the issue of retention rates, one delegation noted that rules on retention rates should be enforced more stringently. The Director pointed out that responsibility for adherence to those rules also rested with sales partners. Proposed stronger cooperation, accountability and improved planning with sales partners would lead to greater transparency in this area. Several delegations welcomed the closer cooperation with GCO and an improved and more closely monitored joint work planning process.

362. In response to a query, the Director reported that the GCO name would also be changed to more accurately reflect its activities at the time of the move of GCO headquarters and when the new GCO structure was announced.

363. The Executive Director expressed the hope that the activities of GCO, an important UNICEF division which related directly to recent Board discussions on financial resources and organization, would receive the fullest attention by Executive Board members in view of the significance of income from the private sector, particularly for general resources. (See the annex, decisions 1997/14 and 1997/15, for the text of the decisions adopted by the Executive Board.)

I. Reports on the meetings of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education and the UNICEF/World Health Organization Joint Committee on Health Policy

UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education

364. The President of the Executive Board presented the report on the sixth meeting of the UNESCO/UNICEF JCE held in Bucharest, Romania, on 5 and 6 May (E/ICEF/1997/18). The discussions covered new areas of cooperation and the important issue of coordination and support at the local level. Also emphasized was the importance of ensuring quality education and training for girls and women. Cooperation between the two organizations in emergency situations was also discussed. (See E/ICEF/1997/CRP.17 for her report on the meeting.)

365. The UNESCO representative in New York said that the collaboration of UNESCO and UNICEF had produced tangible movement towards the goal of universal primary education. UNICEF and UNESCO had been instrumental in creating the Education for All (EFA) momentum, embracing the active participation of the World Bank, UNDP and UNFPA.

366. He urged that the collaboration and co-funding of joint activities in the area of basic education be maintained. UNESCO, for its part, would maintain its contribution of $400,000 annually towards the collaborative programme, and he hoped that UNICEF would also continue its contribution at least for the ongoing phase of 1997.

367. Meanwhile, he said that consultations between the two secretariats at the level of the executive heads were currently in progress to identify modalities for the renewal of the cooperative agreement, and that the outcome of these consultations would be presented to the UNESCO Executive Board by its Director-General.

368. One delegation said that collaboration had at times been too theoretical and that there was a need to move towards more practical outcomes. The meeting in Bucharest had provided the opportunity to review the achievements of the past as well as to review future forms of collaboration. Some areas of collaboration, such as the Mid-Decade Review of EFA at Amman, the programme on educational statistics and collaboration with the International Institute of Educational Planning, had been very successful. However, there were other areas

which now needed to be reviewed critically. There was need to see the partnership between the two organizations not merely as a financial partnership, but as one that involved mutual reflection and commitment to the achievement of common goals.

369. In response, the Executive Director said that it had been agreed that the learning achievement programme should be continued, but with some improvements and with greater decentralization, whereas the innovations programme would be discontinued in its present form. (See the annex, decision 1997/16, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy

370. The President of the Executive Board introduced the report on the thirty-first session of the UNICEF/WHO JCHP held at WHO Headquarters in Geneva on 19 and 20 May (E/ICEF/1997/19). She said that the meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on 49 years of collaboration between UNICEF and WHO. Recent WHO recommendations, as well as health-related programmes of both organizations, were reviewed. Areas requiring a priority focus included new emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases (malaria control, HIV/AIDS, especially the issue of breast-feeding and HIV/AIDS), prevention and control of iodine deficiency, infant and young child nutrition, emergency and humanitarian action, prevention of violence and renewal of the health for all strategy. It was stressed that UNICEF and WHO should continue to collaborate in increasing community involvement, providing greater access of health services to the poorest and ensuring sustainability of health actions. She informed delegations that the World Health Assembly had considered the terms of reference of the new WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health. UNDP had deferred discussion of the issue to its third regular session of 1997, and she suggested that UNICEF do the same. (See E/ICEF/1997/CRP.18 for her report on the meeting.)

371. At the request of one delegation, it was agreed that the report would be brought before the Board again at its September session in connection with consideration of the mandate and terms of reference of the new Coordinating Committee. (See the annex, decision 1997/17, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

372. The Executive Director commented that there had been very substantive interactions at both meetings and that programmes were reviewed to decide what should be continued. It was also agreed that each Committee would meet every two years as originally decided.

J. Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF

373. In introducing the progress report on "Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1997/CRP.15), the Executive Director shared examples of improvements taking place in the process as a result of clarified roles for country, regional and headquarters offices. Although exact figures on expected human resource and budgetary implications of MEP were not available, she assured the Board that changes in the roles of country, regional and headquarters offices would not involve the creation of new structures nor substantive increases in posts within regional offices. She stated that any major staffing changes foreseen would more likely be a consequence of reductions in financial resources and increases in local staff costs rather than a redefinition of roles.

374. The Executive Director stressed that uncertainty due to ongoing change, budget reductions and the possible implications of the restructuring of the United Nations had stirred many valid staff concerns. She expressed her

commitment to communicate developments as soon as they evolved to both UNICEF staff and the Executive Board. She confirmed that UNICEF offices were adopting new roles, work processes, management practices and operating systems, and as experience is gained with the new roles, practices and systems, she would be requesting that reports to the Executive Board include, beginning in 1998, highlighted examples of increased effectiveness as a result of management excellence. She assured the Board that she would continue to monitor and report on how standards of excellence were achieved in the way UNICEF serves children, ensuring that children remain the first to benefit from this initiative through effective country programmes.

375. The Executive Director spoke of activities undertaken since the preparation of the report to develop more effective processes for budget planning and review. They included programme and budget reviews coordinated in the regions allowing for discussions to take into greater account the country and regional contexts; headquarters budgets based on management plans and open budget forums held to encourage wider staff participation in the budget preparation and review process and to contribute towards a greater coordination of the roles of headquarters divisions in supporting field offices; and defining core organizational functions and accountabilities based on management plans to ensure that the functions of various locations work together as a whole to maximize the best use of resources for children. The Executive Director stated that the secretariat would soon be reviewing biennium budget proposals to ensure the most effective use of resources in support of UNICEF programmes and informed of her plans to share preliminary information of the budget with the Board at its third regular session in September.

376. The newly elected President of the Global Staff Association (GSA) addressed the Board, reporting on the status of staff morale within the secretariat. One speaker said that management excellence should not be carried out to the detriment of a committed staff body. Another delegation highlighted the need for the Board to avoid micro-management. Other speakers thanked the GSA President for her statement, stressing the unavoidability of problems during a change process and the need for continued strengthening of human resources management and information-sharing with staff.

377. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the transparency, openness and rigour of the management excellence process to date. Many speakers thanked the secretariat for the clear and informative documentation on the UNICEF system of accountability for the country programme process. One delegation requested that the system of accountability for the secretariat be made complete through clarification of accountabilities of the Executive Board. The Executive Director replied that efforts to clarify Board/secretariat responsibilities were under way and that she looked forward to continued discussions with the Board on this topic.

378. Two delegations said that the description of experiences of regional bodies of other United Nations agencies did not provide sufficient detail. Another speaker regretted that it did not reflect the World Bank experience with regionalization. Several speakers expressed positive assessments of the roles and relationships between country, regional and headquarters offices, encouraging continued movement forward. One delegation welcomed the role of regional offices as defined as it allowed bilateral donor Governments to dialogue with one body rather than with multiple countries. Another speaker stated that the regional approach was more suited to UNICEF than the headquarters approach. One delegation urged the Programme Group at headquarters to undertake initiatives to enhance national capacities.

379. One speaker questioned the value added by the regional office raising concerns about possible redundancies, and welcomed an oral briefing on this topic at the next session of the Board. Another speaker, representing three other delegations, spoke of potential benefits and risks - benefits being found in the country programme planning process and policy development at headquarters and risks relating to the actual functioning of a regional office. This speaker requested that the budget document for the January 1998 session provide a clear picture or outline of typical responsibilities, budget and staffing of regional offices. In addition, the same speaker requested that the progress report for the September 1997 session include a chart focusing only on the new division of labour between headquarters, regional and country offices, addressing, if possible, budget and human resources implications as well as efficiency and effectiveness gains. Two other speakers also requested that preliminary budget information be shared at the September session.

380. The Executive Director assured the Board that UNICEF was very sensitive to the issue of duplication, stating that UNICEF did not have the resources to afford redundancies. She restated the unique roles of country, regional and headquarters offices and their distinct value to the strengthening of the country programme process. Her remarks were followed by two speakers, one who spoke of progress shown in the management of the UNICEF offices and subsequent results for the country programme, and the other who reported on improvements seen at the country level in the areas of country office operations, evaluation and follow up.

381. The Executive Director added that budget and human resources implications to date had been reflected in the integrated budget for regional and headquarters offices approved at the January 1997 Board session. She informed the Board that there was not one model of the typical regional office; however, she stated that the 1998-1999 budget to be submitted to the Board in January 1998 would outline specific budgetary and human resources requirements for each regional office.

382. One delegation raised concerns about the need for training to be responsive to the needs of the different regions. The Executive Director responded that although training was not seen as the answer to all problems, it was important and needed to be responsive to differences in training needs from one place to another. She explained the steps taken by the secretariat to be strategic about training, including resources for training at country and regional levels and the identification of corporate training priorities for 1997.

383. A number of speakers emphasized the link between successful management reform in UNICEF and its contribution to overall United Nations reform. In this light, many speakers welcomed the Executive Director's statement at the opening session. Statements were made by several delegations which reflected the Executive Board's commitment to act as the guardian for future action to ensure that UNICEF remained effective for children. Delegations identified the strong need for UNICEF to retain an independent voice for children, preserving its public recognition and integrity as a precious asset for the wider United Nations system. A few speakers referred specifically to the paramount importance of UNICEF access to senior government officials and the accountability of UNICEF country representatives for all stages of the country programme process.

384. Several delegations said that UNICEF had achieved good results to date. One speaker suggested that a quantitative analysis similar to the matrix prepared by UNFPA be prepared to analyse the outcome of MEP. Another speaker questioned whether management excellence had focused on organizational and

procedural matters at the expense of policy and quality aspects. In response, the Executive Director said that change processes consumed a lot of time in initial stages of implementation and reconfirmed the purpose of management excellence as being to allow UNICEF to move into the twenty-first century as a highly effective organization to advocate for the protection of children's rights, help meet their basic needs and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. She emphasized the secretariat's commitment to programming, with continued attention to enhancing quality, as reflected in a number of the reports discussed at the present session.

K. Field visit of Executive Board members

385. The report on the field visit of Board members to Malawi and Zambia from 31 March to 13 April 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/CRP.16) was introduced by the team leader and Vice-President of the Board. It was a very full and fruitful visit, during which team members met with representatives of the two Governments, other United Nations agencies and various NGOs, as well as with community leaders and UNICEF staff. The team viewed UNICEF-supported projects covering a variety of activities in many programme areas. They welcomed the opportunity to see first-hand the real problems facing women and children in the two countries and expressed appreciation to the Malawi and Zambia country offices for organizing the programme of the visit.

386. In commenting on the experience of the team member from his country, another speaker said that his team member appreciated being able to observe the positive impact of UNICEF programmes on local reality. He had emphasized that more efforts should be made regarding coordination with other United Nations agencies. He had also urged UNICEF to increase cooperation with all international NGOs working in the two countries and not to focus on only the small number of the largest NGOs. UNICEF should encourage the Governments to improve their institutional capacity to monitor and evaluate implementation of the country programmes. He had prepared an evaluation paper which contained more detailed comments on the visit which could be circulated to Board members.

387. Another member of the team thanked the relevant UNICEF offices for their efforts and cooperation, adding that he had learned a great deal about operational activities. He suggested that members of the Government should be invited to visit programme sites as well.

388. One delegation stressed the importance of these visits which provided Board members with an opportunity to see what UNICEF was actually doing in the field. It would also help to sensitize them to the way in which issues that fell within the mandate of the Board should be addressed. He asked if team members had seen any effects or results of change management in the field, specifically in areas such as the country management process, staff morale and accountability as this had not been reflected in the report.

389. The team leader replied that there had been no particular focus on change management, but based on what the team had been able to observe, the current structure of UNICEF generally reflected the reality of the situation and UNICEF offices were working effectively in these countries. The purpose of the visit, he said, was to learn how UNICEF programmes were implemented.

L. Presentation of the 1997 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

390. The President and the Executive Director made brief statements congratulating the Legal Assistance Centre of Namibia on its selection as winner of the 1997 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award. Mr. Andrew Corbett, Director, accepted the Award on behalf of the Centre.

M. Other matters

391. The representative of Albania expressed his country's deep appreciation for the work done by UNICEF in that country during its recent problems. He thanked UNICEF, and especially the UNICEF representative, for its continued and uninterrupted support. The "courage and devotion" shown by the UNICEF staff in Tirana represented the work of the entire United Nations system in Albania.

N. Closing remarks by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board

392. In her closing remarks, the President acknowledged the hard work and good will of all participants in reaching consensus on some difficult issues. The Board's informal meeting on United Nations reform had shown the importance of participation and of not being indifferent. While UNICEF was prepared to accept changes, it was important that it continue to speak for children. The support of the National Committees for UNICEF in that effort was crucial, as they represented the voice of those outside the United Nations system.

393. During the session, most of the discussions had focused on ways of improving UNICEF programmes, particularly concerning the strategy for children in need of special protection measures and as reported in the Executive Director's report. The session had been very productive, but the third regular session in September would require even more action, creativity and sincerity in the context of United Nations reform.

394. The Executive Director thanked the members of the Bureau, Board members and observer delegations, and representatives of National Committees for their guidance and hard work. She was confident that the discussions had conveyed a sense of richness of UNICEF programme activities as well as reasons to be encouraged about progress in realizing the goals of the World Summit for Children. One of the paramount challenges facing the organization, she stressed, was to ensure that the same spectrum of human rights accorded to adults were specifically upheld for children and women.

395. The Executive Director said that the discussions during the session had underlined a fundamental point of the rights-based approach - that the primary responsibility for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child rested with Governments, and that it was the role of UNICEF to support those efforts. It was clear that the reliance on a rights-based framework would not entail any fundamental changes in the country programme process. But UNICEF recognized that because the Convention covered children's physical as well as psycho-social needs, UNICEF must continue to broaden its analysis to address issues of disparity and discrimination. And because the Convention is a legal document, UNICEF must of necessity become more deeply involved in efforts to protect children as a matter of law as well as policy.

396. In closing, she expressed appreciation for the opportunity provided to exchange views and concerns about the United Nations-wide reform process. The discussions had set a high standard for constructiveness and responsibility.

1996 UNICEF Staff Awards for Outstanding Service

397. The Executive Director announced the winners of the 1996 Staff Awards, which are presented each year in recognition of exemplary accomplishments as members of groups, teams, offices or sections. The winners were the Operations Centre of the Office of Emergency Programmes, New York, for its effective support to the field during humanitarian crises; the Operations Team of the UNICEF office in Lagos, Nigeria, for its dramatic improvements to programme effectiveness; the UNICEF office in Jakarta, Indonesia, for its outstanding programme delivery; and the UNICEF office in Conakry, Guinea, for its innovative management improvements.

Part four

THIRD REGULAR SESSION OF 1997

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 9 to 12 September 1997

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director

398. In her opening statement, the President addressed some of the issues before the Board at the present session, including the conditions of service of staff and other human resources matters, funding and United Nations reform. She stressed the need for UNICEF to establish strategic alliances and to develop a long-term vision regardless of any short-term situations.

399. Welcoming delegations to the fourth meeting of 1997, the Executive Director provided an update on UNICEF and the United Nations reform process. UNICEF was committed to reform, both in the United Nations system and within UNICEF, through its Management Excellence Programme (MEP), and she cited some examples of the way in which the organization was already engaged in transforming the Secretary-General's vision into operational reality in the field. On the other hand, she continued, the difficult financial situation of UNICEF and the rest of the development apparatus of the United Nations system presented serious implications for the future of hundreds of millions of the world's children. In response, UNICEF was forced to take decisive action - including the reduction and freezing of posts, reductions in travel and the elimination of some activities - which, she recognized, was stirring hardship for its staff. She stressed, however, that UNICEF would continue to do everything possible to protect the interests of all of its staff.

400. At the same time, there was no slackening in the organization's continued commitment to the world's children and to their right to "survival, protection and full development". She spoke about her visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea where she witnessed first hand the drought conditions that have put some 800,000 children at risk and the vital part that UNICEF, working with the World Food Programme (WFP), other United Nations agencies and donor countries had to play. She said that situations such as this and other issues confronting UNICEF on a daily basis around the world - such as safe water, basic education, with a special emphasis on girls and women, children in especially difficult circumstances, etc. - all spoke directly to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, "a document that is at once the core of UNICEF's work, and the torch that lights the way".

401. She welcomed the announcement of Olara Otunnu as the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Children and Conflict and the appointment of President Mary Robinson of Ireland as the new High Commissioner for Human Rights.

402. Following the statements, delegations observed a moment of silence in memory of Mother Teresa and Princess Diana.

B. Adoption of the agenda

403. The agenda of the session, as contained in document E/ICEF/1997/20, was adopted. The agenda contained the following items:

Item 1:	Opening of the session: statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director
Item 2:	Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work
Item 3:	UNICEF and the United Nations reform process

Item 4: Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

Item 5: Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF

Item 6: Supply operations

Item 7: Financial medium-term plan (MTP) for the period 1997-2000

Item 8: Preview of the 1998-1999 integrated budget

Item 9: UNICEF interim financial report and statements

Item 10: Oral report on decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council

Item 11: World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Coordinating Committee on Health (CCH): proposed terms of reference

Item 12: Programme of work for 1998

Item 13: Other matters

Item 14: Closing of the session: remarks by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board

404. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 69 observer delegations had submitted credentials for the session.

405. In addition, 4 United Nations bodies, 4 specialized agencies, 13 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 4 National Committees for UNICEF and Palestine had submitted credentials.

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. UNICEF and the United Nations reform process

406. The Executive Director presented the oral report on this agenda item. She stated that the major concerns regarding reform raised by UNICEF at the annual session in June had been acknowledged and addressed by the Secretary-General in his July report to the General Assembly. She welcomed his reform proposal, viewing it as an opportunity to put children at the centre of the work of the United Nations. She foresaw additional opportunities for UNICEF to improve linkages between and among the Strategic Planning Unit, the Division of Evaluation, Policy and Planning (EPP) and the Innocenti Centre in Florence, and for enhanced cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNICEF in the area of child rights.

407. On the administrative side, she said that areas such as common services and standards, as well as procurement, would benefit from review under the reform process. She would work with the UNICEF Global Management Team to undertake modest internal rearrangements aimed at mainstreaming the reform initiatives. In sum, UNICEF remained actively engaged in United Nations reform.

408. There was widespread support for UNICEF involvement as a full participant in the Secretary-General's Track 1 and Track 2 proposals, particularly the fact that UNICEF chaired a number of key working groups. A number of delegations agreed with the Executive Director's assessment of the opportunities created by the reform process, which aimed at enhancing capacity to deliver services in a more efficient and effective way.

409. Several delegations stated that the approach taken by UNICEF on this issue at the annual and present sessions was constructive and appropriate. Many speakers expressed their satisfaction that concerns voiced at the June session regarding the Track 2 reform proposal had now been alleviated.

410. The fact that UNICEF would seek a closer working relationship with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was welcomed by many delegations. UNICEF was also urged to strengthen its partnership with the Bretton Woods institutions, and the Executive Director replied that she saw opportunities for increased action in this area.

411. A number of delegations pointed out that the internal work done by UNICEF on MEP placed it in a position to lead in the reform process and expressed satisfaction with the early outcome.

412. Concern was expressed about the downward trend in financial resources and its possible effect on UNICEF programmes. The secretariat responded that a reformed organization without resources would not be able to carry out its various missions. In this connection, the Executive Director was urged to redouble fund-raising efforts to reverse this trend.

413. Several delegations supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that consideration be given to convening joint meetings of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/UNFPA and UNICEF on issues of common concern. The Executive Director pointed out that there was some useful precedence in the successful joint meetings held on the harmonization of budget presentations.

414. Responding to queries regarding the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Executive Director said that 11 countries had been

identified for a pilot phase to be under way before the end of the year. She hoped that UNDAF would help to provide coherence to country programmes and that other parts of the United Nations system would also find it useful. The secretariat would keep the Board updated on the ongoing reform process.

B. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

415. The Executive Board had before it a total of 24 country programme recommendations (CPRs), which were summarized in the "round up" document (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.18). The President reminded the Executive Board that the submissions were divided into two groups. The first group of CPRs were presented as addenda to the country notes discussed by the Board at the first regular session in January. In accordance with decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), those recommendations were to be approved on a "no objection" basis. Delegations had been advised to notify the secretariat in advance in writing if they wanted to comment on any of those CPRs, and a number of delegations had indicated their wish to comment. In accordance with rule 50.1 of the Rules of Procedure, any delegation had the right to participate in the discussion when its own country programme was under consideration.

416. The remaining CPRs were either "bridging" recommendations for short-duration country programmes, recommendations for additional general resources to fund already approved programmes, or "stand-alone" supplementary funding proposals. Delegations were not required to provide prior notice about addressing them.

417. In view of the interest expressed by some Board members, the regional directors were to report briefly on the implications of management excellence on the country programme process from a regional perspective in their oral presentations.

418. There was a discussion with respect to clarification of the procedure for a "no objection" approval for country programmes for which the Board had reviewed a country note during the first regular session. Several delegations felt that the provisions of decision 1995/8 allowed any delegation to discuss a country programme as long as one delegation had already indicated in writing that it wished to do so. The secretariat, on the other hand, as well as some other delegations, understood the provision to require all delegations that wished to speak on a country programme to submit a written request to do so. It was agreed that for the present session, any delegation that wished to speak on a country programme should be allowed to do so to enable the Board discussion to proceed. It was suggested that the Bureau might wish to elaborate on the procedure so that it was sufficiently clear to all parties concerned.

West and Central Africa

419. The Executive Board had before it three full-length CPRs for Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau and Mali (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.1.Add.1-E/ICEF/1997/P/L.3/Add.1, respectively), two short-duration proposals for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.21 and E/ICEF/1997/P/L.22, respectively) and one recommendation for additional general resources (Democratic Republic of the Congo). In her presentation, the Regional Director for West and Central Africa highlighted some of the changes being carried out by UNICEF in its programme approach in the region. These included an increased emphasis on the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a point of reference for the programming process; a more rigorous choice of programme priorities aimed at reaching the greatest number of beneficiaries and with increased complementarity with the activities of other agencies; reducing the verticality of sectoral programmes in the fields of health, education and water and sanitation and

making them less service delivery-oriented; and strengthened collaboration with NGOs and the increased participation of communities in programme planning and management. She explained the regional programme and budget review process, noting that because of recent political events, programming for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone had been especially difficult.

420. Several delegations praised the Mali CPR, which they described as ambitious, but encouraging. It incorporated a focus on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and positioned UNICEF in a new advocacy role for rights with civil society, the media, NGOs, and multilateral and bilateral donors. However, one delegation noted the lack of financial resources for such activities. The delegation also noted the lack of legal texts to counter female genital mutilation and the continued prevalence of high mortality rates.

421. Although reference was made to coordination in health, little was said on the same subject in water supply and sanitation. Since Mali was one of the 11 pilot countries involved in UNDAF, it was likely that coordination would be strengthened, and the secretariat was requested to provide additional information on the subject. In response, the Regional Director confirmed that UNICEF enjoyed a close working relationship in the health and education sectors with the World Bank in Mali, where the programme preparation process had been very stimulating. However, it was possible that collaboration had not been as strong in the water sector. She described the close working relationship between UNICEF and other development partners in all sectors in Mali, adding that UNICEF also cooperated very closely with the Government, which enabled the organization to contribute effectively and to play a catalytic role in the coordination of social sector reforms. UNDAF was quite advanced in the country and UNICEF was fully involved. In fact, the country note submitted to the Board in January was the result of cooperation within the UNDAF process.

422. Concern was expressed about whether the reduction of personnel in the country office would reduce programme implementation rates. The Regional Director explained that this was more in the way of a rationalization and that working in collaboration with other partners was the important issue. The same speaker reiterated his request made at the January session that the country note and the CPR include maps to enable the reader to see where UNICEF was operating and a timetable for implementation.

423. Some questions were raised about the calculation of resources available for Mali, with one speaker stressing that as Mali was one of the poorest countries in the region, there should be no reduction in funds. The Regional Director said that it was her understanding that there was no abnormal decrease in general resources allocated by UNICEF to Mali; supplementary funding, however, depended on the generosity of donors. She assured delegations that if planned resources did not materialize, the number and spread of activities would be affected, but not quality.

424. Several delegations expressed doubts as to whether it was possible for UNICEF to implement a two-year country programme in Sierra Leone since, given the fragile country environment and security situation, the minimal conditions for realistic planning were absent. Moreover, most United Nations agencies had suspended activities. In fact, the speaker doubted whether implementation would be possible in the foreseeable future. However, another speaker urged UNICEF to continue its programme assistance, especially in view of the fact that the other agencies had withdrawn.

425. Responding to concern expressed about the programme preparation process, the Regional Director explained that the broad outlines of the country programme had been agreed before May with the previous Government without much detail. For obvious reasons, the agreements had not been renegotiated. She emphasized that UNICEF had to provide assistance in health, water supply and protection to women and children in Sierra Leone. She recognized that many United Nations agencies had ceased operations there, but a distinction should be made between development and humanitarian organizations. UNICEF had a humanitarian mandate as well. In spite of the situation, UNICEF needed to have a programme to have a legal basis for recruiting and paying staff, and a one-year bridging programme was too limited and constrained staff recruitment. Stressing the need for flexibility in this type of programme, the secretariat agreed to provide periodic updates on the country situation, the progress of programme implementation and the availability of personnel and financial resources.

426. Delegations expressed satisfaction with the country programme presented for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The priorities articulated in the CPR were in line with national priorities, especially for health and basic education. One speaker appreciated the opportunity to participate in the early deliberations regarding the programme and encouraged other country offices to do the same. The same delegation expressed satisfaction that comments on the country note had been taken into account. However, UNICEF was urged to define indicators to measure the results of activities.

427. Some delegations suggested that the secretariat rethink its future presentations to the Board on countries experiencing emergency or other difficult situations such as Sierra Leone and Liberia. A different kind of presentation for such countries, where events were changing rapidly, would be more realistic and up to date.

Eastern and Southern Africa

428. The Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa described some of the positive developments and trends in the region, adding that the positive trends were counterbalanced by continuing and complex emergencies in several countries. In introducing the two short-duration country programmes for Burundi and Rwanda (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.19 and E/ICEF/1997/P/L.20, respectively), she said that the country programme preparation process had benefited significantly from the process of subregional strategy meetings which had involved not only UNICEF staff, but also participation from United Nations partners, in particular the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and WFP, as well as relevant NGOs and the International Committee of the Red Cross. There was also a decentralized programme review process.

429. One delegation suggested that the objectives of the Rwanda country programme were unclear and too broad. There was no mention of the trauma counselling activities that had been so successful in the previous programme. Questions were also raised about the "Education for Peace" activities. Clarification was sought on the sources of information on the number of children in especially difficult circumstances assisted by UNICEF and whether these numbers were a product of the Common Country Assessment. The same speaker also wanted to know the criteria used to select the 66 communes for implementation of the water supply and sanitation activities. Another delegation thanked the secretariat for its frank analysis of the situation in the Great Lakes Region, but requested clarification on existing coordination mechanisms and the role of UNICEF in them. The delegation of the country thanked the Executive Board for its support, noting that collaboration between the Government and UNICEF would continue.

430. The Regional Director explained that the statistics on children in especially difficult circumstances in Rwanda were based on programme assessments on the number of children carried out by UNICEF and were estimates. The criteria for the selection of communes to benefit from water supply and sanitation activities were incorporated into a vulnerability assessment carried out by UNICEF and its partners. As for programme objectives in Rwanda, the Regional Director pointed out that more details could be found in the master plan of operations. Psycho-social rehabilitation efforts in Rwanda were being evaluated so that UNICEF would be able to determine what had worked and what had not. The evaluation would also allow for a greater understanding of needs. Relief needs in the north-west of Rwanda were still high, but there would be a gradual shift from relief to rehabilitation, with some emphasis on preparedness.

431. One speaker expressed satisfaction with the Burundi CPR, saying that it was short, concise and well-calibrated. The need for a flexible approach was stressed, and the search for national dialogue, especially at community level, was strongly supported. The decision to decentralize operations and staff so as to provide better support to community-level activities was appreciated. These, along with the further strengthening of social policies at national level, should remain among UNICEF priorities. Questions were raised about the real impact of the country programme, given the limited resources and magnitude of needs, and it was suggested that the secretariat provide the Board with an update on the country programme environment in 1998.

432. The Regional Director described the situation in Burundi as volatile and requiring a measure of flexibility. There were many insecure areas where UNICEF could only operate through NGOs and promote life-saving interventions. That was why UNICEF had developed a decentralized support system.

433. While expressing appreciation for UNICEF support, the delegation of the country agreed with the proposal that the Board should review the situation in Burundi next year. The Government was committed to improving the situation and concurred with the UNICEF approach to planning on a triennial basis.

Latin America and the Caribbean

434. The Board had before it three full-length CPRs for Bolivia, Venezuela and the multi-country programme for the Eastern Caribbean, the latter also including a recommendation for additional general resources (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.4/Add.1, E/ICEF/1997/P/L.5/Add.1 and E/ICEF/1997/P/L.6/Add.1 and Corr.1, respectively), one short-duration proposal for Haiti (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.23) and one stand-alone supplementary funding proposal for the subregional programme for the Andean region (PROANDES) (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.24). In a brief overview, the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean outlined the diversity represented by these different country situations and described the focus of these and previous years CPRs on translating child and women's rights into specific programme features. She also described the modifications introduced to the process of CPR and budget formulation and review.

435. Many delegations thanked UNICEF for its good work in the region and encouraged increased collaboration among United Nations agencies in the field. Several delegations also expressed satisfaction with PROANDES, which covered a number of countries with different social and economic policies. However, they cautioned that using a multi-country programme approach should not mean the homogeneous treatment of all component countries. One delegation stated that this initiative would be a key in joint actions to improve local structures. Many delegations expressed appreciation for supplementary funds contributions to PROANDES, and one delegation, in particular, welcomed the opportunity to

participate in the process of evaluation and preparation of the programme. The same delegation confirmed the continuation and probable full support to the third phase.

436. With regard to PROANDES, the Regional Director commented that each country component was specific to country realities and complementary to the regular country programme. The advantage of having a multi-country approach was the increased ability to share experiences, to find economies of scale and to network. A small subregional component administered by the Regional Office also helped in the interfacing with donors. Finally, the Regional Director thanked the new Government of one of the countries presenting a CPR for its readiness to receive UNICEF and adopt the new country programme.

437. Two delegations noted that the country programme for Haiti was shifting from an emergency towards a development perspective and that it was important to take the lessons learned from the past programme cooperation into consideration when addressing priority areas. One delegation noted the situation in the country and expressed concern about the ratio of general resources to supplementary funding. The same delegation stated that the recent changes in UNICEF programme personnel might lead to a weakness in the country programme. Additional information was requested about initiatives in the areas of reproductive health and HIV/AIDS as these were not mentioned in the CPR. Another delegation requested that support to community-based NGOs be properly verified and appropriate within the national context.

438. The Regional Director thanked the delegations for their comments, explaining that the two-year bridging programme was designed to better respond to the transition between a period where cooperation was solely through NGOs to a gradual shift to institutional capacity-building, based on the Government's increasing capacities as well as on the strong network of community-based initiatives and an increasingly structured civil society. Being a top priority in the region, this programme had received a sizeable amount of supplementary funding from various donors in recent years, and UNICEF had assurances of continued contributions; nevertheless care would be exercised to ensure that the core programme was not at risk. On reproductive health, she explained that the reduction of maternal mortality was a central focus of the programme and that HIV/AIDS was addressed through the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in the areas of health education and supply of solo-shot syringes. She added that this effort was being complemented with a regional initiative with UNAIDS in the area of communication.

Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

439. In his introduction, the Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Baltic States noted that the multi-country programme for the region (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.30), was prepared within the context of the regional approach paper reviewed by the Board at its second regular session of 1996 and was developed to address the most urgent cross-cutting problems affecting the 11 countries. He summarized some of the major activities and highlights that had characterized UNICEF work in the region, including its response to the acute emergencies and the regionalization of UNICEF activities within the framework of the management excellence process.

440. In general, delegations endorsed the multi-country programme for 11 countries of the region. The programme was well-focused and represented an important contribution to the well-being of children in the region.

441. The secretariat agreed to consult with the speaker who commented on the importance of statistical consistency in UNICEF publications such as The Progress of Nations, The State of the World's Children and reports issued by the International Child Development Centre, Florence.

442. One speaker observed that while the new programme as a whole reflected a correct interpretation of the social situation in the countries of the region, there were areas where UNICEF could play a positive role not only to support the strategic goals of the programme to sustain social achievements of past years, but also to help reform those institutes working in the areas of maternal and child protection in accordance with the new circumstances and realities of the countries in the region. The secretariat concurred and cited the work being done by a multi-United Nations team in Ukraine addressing the serious HIV/AIDS problem among young people as an example of combining the need to maintain the achievements of the past with ensuring that mothers and children have protection against newer, rising problems. Several delegations cited the deteriorating situation of children, which was recently highlighted in the UNICEF report on "Children at Risk in Central and Eastern Europe", and the need for UNICEF activities to reach children in need of special protection measures. The Regional Director confirmed that this was a major area of concern and that as work progressed, reports on this subject would be shared with Board members.

443. In response to the delegation that emphasized the need to find new ways to mobilize additional funds, including funds from recipient countries, the secretariat expressed an interest in having further discussions on the subject.

444. Regarding concern expressed about the increase in the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS and how United Nations agencies were collaborating together to address these problems, the Regional Director referred to the UNICEF approach in Ukraine where there was joint collaboration with WHO, a network on substance abuse, and work with WHO on adolescent health, UNAIDS in Ukraine and other regions and countries. He described these efforts as part of a larger process that was currently ongoing with the support of UNAIDS, which carefully reviewed the changing situation of STDs and HIV/AIDS in countries.

445. In addition to the common problems shared with other countries in the region, the situation in Bulgaria was particularly difficult given the limited financial resources, e.g., for the children of itinerant Roma ethnic groups as well as for Bulgarian children who were not immunized against hepatitis B due to acute vaccine shortages. The Regional Director reaffirmed that UNICEF was deeply concerned with the protection of the rights of all ethnic groups in the region, and that support to the immunization of young children was always considered in analysing its collaboration in countries. He also referred to his opening statement describing UNICEF emergency support to Bulgaria. UNICEF, in collaboration with UNDP and international NGOs, provided emergency assistance to Bulgaria during the first half of 1997, and was currently engaged in a reassessment in order to follow-up on this activity.

446. Several speakers said that the analysis of the situation of women and children in the text was thorough, but too general, and indicated that without an analysis at the national level, it was difficult to understand how UNICEF planned to assist individual countries. The Regional Director said that over the past three or four years, detailed country situation analyses had been developed for virtually all countries. He remarked that the "MONEE" reports (the regional project in monitoring the transition in Central and Eastern Europe) probably provided the best single database on socio-economic conditions in 18 countries.

447. Concern was expressed that, given the diversity of actions planned in the 11 countries and the limited resources, UNICEF risked spreading itself too thinly. The Regional Director stated that the document attempted to identify how resources would be distributed, and that resources earmarked for advocacy, communications, monitoring, evaluation and applied research were an integral part of UNICEF programme assistance. In order to have a balanced programme approach, it was important to use resources to start important activities in collaboration with other United Nations organizations, international NGOs, government organizations and institutions of civil society, and to find ways to include appropriate advocacy and social mobilization components.

448. Information was requested about the mechanisms in place for the National Committees to manage UNICEF funds and whether the budget allocated to them was higher than their contribution to the organization. The Regional Director clarified that the programme funds would be managed by the regional office together with the partners in the respective country. He added that while programme resources were not normally allocated to National Committees, there had been a few instances in which UNICEF had provided some resources to support the iodization of salt and the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. Responding to a query, the Regional Director confirmed the involvement of UNICEF with both the European Union and WHO in these countries and throughout the region, and also confirmed that collaboration with all partners could be reported on in more detail in future.

449. The Executive Director welcomed the delegations' comments on multi-country programmes in general. Given that this type of programme used limited resources, UNICEF would be considering this type of programme management alternative for future activities elsewhere. Given the significant differences among countries in the region, the mix of programmes in different countries, and the level of development and capacities of Governments, NGOs and civil society, the Executive Director stated that it was not accurate to describe a programme as "health", "education", or "protection" according to traditional concepts. Depending on the particular capacities of a country, the work that UNICEF did in terms of technical advice, advocacy and communication was also an integral part of programmes provided that it had an impact and could be evaluated.

East Asia and the Pacific

450. The Regional Director for the East Asia and Pacific Region introduced the two CPRs from the region - the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Papua New Guinea (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.7/Add.1 and Corr.1 and E/ICEF/1997/P/L.8/Add.1, respectively) . She highlighted that while the region was known for its high achievements in economic and social terms, the two countries presented a striking contrast with much of the region as regards key child survival and development indicators. Both countries shared some characteristics that had implications for UNICEF cooperation, namely large proportions of isolated communities; wide linguistic and cultural diversity; limited physical infrastructure; limited national capacities for the development of social sector policy planning and programme implementation, resulting in low coverage of basic social services; a growing proportion of children in need of special protection; and early signs of an expanding HIV/AIDS epidemic. Both countries were also moving from a needs-based to a rights-based approach. She also expressed appreciation for the support received from the donor community and stressed the importance of coordination among United Nations agencies. She noted that the work of the UNICEF regional management team (RMT) had added value to the country programmes and improved the quality of country programme preparation and accountability.

451. Delegations commented positively on the quality of both CPRs and expressed their support for the proposed programme strategies as well as areas for future intervention. Concerns raised about the country notes during the January Board session had been taken into account in the CPRs and the proposed strategies seemed to be based on the lessons learned at the respective country mid-term reviews (MTRs). The delegations of the two countries expressed their appreciation for UNICEF efforts in helping their respective Governments to address the challenges of child survival, development and protection and noted that the results were concrete and significant.

452. With regard to the country programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic, UNICEF was urged to help maintain the momentum of increased coverage of the expanded programme on immunization (EPI) and to continue its support so as to translate the goals for children into reality. However, another speaker questioned the claim made in the document that immunization rates had improved in recent years as this contradicted figures given in the national health plan. The Regional Director explained that the budget crisis and internal unrest had affected the EPI patrols, resulting in fluctuations in levels of EPI coverage in some provinces. However, coverage had begun to improve in some provinces through programme interventions, although she agreed that it would not be correct to imply that it had done so on a nationwide basis.

453. Malaria control was also an important focus. Highlighting the fact that malaria was not only a major cause of under-five mortality, but also death among youth, one delegation expressed support for the strategy of provision of impregnated bednets. He added that it would be important to also tackle the problem through prevention by dealing with mosquito breeding. He requested more information on the subject and suggested that a joint programme be undertaken with WHO and other United Nations agencies. On the question of malaria control, the Regional Director said that the problem of mosquito breeding was largely an environmental issue and tackling it would require further discussion with the Government. She stated that a recent visit of a donor Government to the country had helped to clarify a number of questions related to cooperation in EPI and would help to improve future collaboration. Cooperation with other donors and among United Nations agencies, she added, was very effective in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and the Government had provided the leadership for the initiative.

454. Referring to the programme for Papua New Guinea, one speaker said that the programme was formulated on a sound basis and rightly highlighted the low status of women. The lessons of the MTR had been noted. These had highlighted the importance of capacity-building and of the role played by churches and other NGOs involved in the delivery of services. The same speaker also said that the Milne Bay area-based programme could serve as a model for further dissemination as it was a good example of the involvement of such partners. Another delegation urged UNICEF to strengthen its collaboration with all partners.

455. One speaker remarked that the Asia-Pacific region as a whole was facing emerging diseases such as HIV/AIDS and that cross-border traffic was contributing to the spread of the epidemic. The same speaker asked how the problem could be addressed by integrating HIV/AIDS control with the maternal and child health programme. The Regional Director noted that cross-border issues were very much recognized in the Mekong AIDS control programme, supported by the Government of the Netherlands in six countries, where it was linked with the problem of child exploitation. The programme had enabled UNICEF to gain experience in multi-country programmes and promoted the multisectoral linkages. The respective Governments had also been approached in relation to cross-border questions and bilateral discussions were being undertaken. Although the subject was sensitive, the responses had been positive.

South Asia

456. In presenting the proposal for a short-duration country programme for India (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.25), the Regional Director for South Asia stated that the one-year extension to the existing country programme had been developed within the framework of the country note approved by the Executive Board in January. He outlined the reasons for presenting a one-year extension rather than a full-length country programme, highlighted some recent achievements in India and drew attention to key elements of the new programme. He also commented on the strong interconnection between the management reform process and efforts to move towards rights-based programming.

457. The delegation of the country stated that UNICEF cooperation had been of critical importance not only in material terms, but also in evolving new ideas and strategies for the betterment of children. She also acknowledged UNICEF contributions to various programme areas. She said that the one-year extension would allow the further development of new approaches, while consolidating the old ones within a rights framework. It was hoped that inter-agency coordination would be enhanced through India's participation in UNDAF.

458. Several delegations were pleased to note that India would be undertaking the preparation of UNDAF and, in view of this and the broader implications of the restructuring of the United Nations, fully supported the extension of the current bridging programme. However, other speakers questioned the decision to present a one-year bridging programme instead of a full-length programme as expected in view of the submission of a country note at the January session. The Regional Director replied that there had been no problems. Although a good programme could have been prepared, it was decided that a much better one could be developed if it was delayed a year. Moreover, it was determined that the ongoing assessment of the existing programme and the development of a full country programme management plan (CPMP) both required more time.

459. Further explanations were sought about how UNICEF intended to defend and protect the rights of children and in what ways the programme would seek to work in the areas of child prostitution and child labour, with one delegation noting that apart from pursuing universal primary education (UPE), UNICEF strategies for the elimination of the vast problem of child labour were not clear. There was a need for more explicit targets to deal with the problem. The focus should be on specific groups and on non-formal approaches, especially for girls. The Regional Director noted that UNICEF was still in the learning stage about the problem of child prostitution and the first steps had been simply to be able to discuss the problem and get acceptance that it actually existed so that an action plan could be developed. There would be more specific plans in the next programme. With regard to child labour, he noted that although the problem was very prevalent throughout the region, no other country in South Asia had taken such clear and practical steps to combat it as had India. UNICEF and the Government of India recognized that UPE was necessary for the elimination of child labour, other interventions were also required, and these had to be determined for each context. He also noted that countries in South Asia shared a problem of poor quality date on primary education which was why UNICEF had started supporting the collection of data down to the block level to try to understand the problems and formulate specific solutions. Dealing with averages, even at district level in India, was inadequate for determining solutions.

460. In response to comments about the problems of maternal mortality and the lack of focus on adolescents, especially in terms of reproductive health, where strategies should also be targetted to boys, the Regional Director said that strategies in these areas were being developed and that UNICEF would like to

become more involved in adolescent health, but was not yet sure how best it could do so. He added that maternal mortality and adolescent health were also the result of how healthy mothers and adolescents had been as children, which was why UNICEF was focusing on child nutrition where it had a clear mandate.

461. With regard to the implications for UNICEF of the decentralization of the programme, the Regional Director said that UNICEF already had a decentralized structure in India, with 10 field offices. Trying to find an appropriate balance between the needs of the centralized or national-level actions and the decentralized components would be one of the main purposes of the CPMP being prepared by the office.

462. While welcoming the proposed support for women's empowerment, especially through NGOs, one donor delegation said that UNICEF should extend its cooperation with NGOs, especially at the decentralized levels. The Regional Director remarked that UNICEF had given priority to the training of women members of local authorities (panchayats) as the fundamental cause of many of the problems in such areas of health, education and child labour was the subordination of women and the legitimization of traditional practices and attitudes. Training of women for their roles in panchayats authorities would lead to a process of women's empowerment and, so far, results had been encouraging. He added that UNICEF also wanted to increase collaboration with civil society groups as well as with community-based structures.

Middle East and North Africa

463. The Board had before it a full-length CPR for Jordan (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.10/Add.1), and six recommendations for short-duration country programmes for Algeria; the Islamic Republic of Iran, which also included a proposal for additional general resources; and the programmes for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the West Bank and Gaza (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.26 and Corr.1, E/ICEF/1997/P/L.27 and E/ICEF/1997/P/L.29, respectively) and a request for additional general resources for Iraq (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.28). The Regional Director said that since all the countries had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF offices in the region were supporting the process of reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. He reported on some of the significant accomplishments in the region. There were several areas of concern, however, including gender issues and the effects of sanctions on children and women. MEP, he said, had resulted in added value and efficiency to the work of the region through increased sharing of resources among country offices for reviewing programmes, for programme audits and for technical expertise.

464. Following the presentation, numerous delegations expressed agreement with the work being done in the region. With regard to Iraq, one delegation stated that sufficient funds needed to be allocated realistically to meet the urgent needs of Iraqi children and women. The Regional Director agreed with the observation made by two delegations on the need to continue to provide trauma counselling for Palestinian children in the West Bank and Gaza and Lebanon.

465. One delegation stated that the UNICEF and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) cooperation was important and needed to be continued. In response to concern about the reduction in funding of UNRWA and its effects on UNICEF, the Regional Director said that UNICEF-supported activities would not be unduly affected.

466. Two delegations requested UNICEF to adopt the same nomenclature of "occupied territories" as used by other United Nations bodies. It was also requested that more attention be given to children's needs in Jerusalem and to

the development of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS programme component. The Regional Director responded that the secretariat would need to advise on the nomenclature, and that HIV/AIDS was already incorporated into the country programmes.

467. The Regional Director agreed with another delegation on the need to focus more on the reduction of maternal mortality in the region.

468. Concerning UNICEF assistance to refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Regional Director reported that UNICEF assistance to the country was for all children and women.

469. One delegation stated that the nutritional situation of children in Iraq has deteriorated seriously and that resources needed to be made available. The Regional Director assured the continued support of UNICEF.

470. In addition, two delegations endorsed the respective CPRs covering their countries and expressed their appreciation for the cooperation established between UNICEF and their respective Governments.

471. See chapter III, decision 1997/22, for the recommendations approved by the Executive Board.

C. Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF

Progress report on oversight

472. The Director of Change Management introduced the report (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.12) and described how the UNICEF system of oversight served to ensure high quality programmes through the responsible use of resources for the maximum benefit of children. She pointed out that one of the objectives of MEP had been to create a more enabling and proactive management culture based on clear accountabilities. These efforts had resulted in an increased concern for cost-effectiveness, efficient work processes and the close monitoring of performance throughout the organization.

473. She summarized some of the measures being taken to ensure the application of the system of oversight, such as the establishment of oversight committees by RMTs to support regional oversight responsibilities. She also spoke about how technical capacities for monitoring and evaluation were being strengthened through training on evaluation design, methodologies and management of the evaluation function.

474. Additional resources were being allotted to the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) to allow for an increase in coverage of audit activities. Training sessions on control self-assessment to help managers spot potential risks and identify corrective action had been completed in 62 offices.

475. The Programme Manager System and the Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing were being developed to enable managers in all locations to have access to timely and accurate information related to the appropriate management of UNICEF resources for children.

476. She highlighted some of the remaining challenges in strengthening the overall accountability environment and oversight function in UNICEF. In conclusion, she drew attention to the recommended annual report on internal audit activities which, together with the annual regional reports on results of evaluations and mid-term reviews, would provide the Board with a more complete view on progress and results achieved as a result of oversight activities.

477. Many delegations expressed appreciation for the comprehensive description of oversight processes in UNICEF, noting that a proper balance had been struck between the roles of country, regional and headquarters offices as described in the report. Two speakers requested more information on how the system actually functions at the current time and on the value added by the regional offices.

478. One delegation, supported by others, requested that the secretariat provide information on budgetary and human resources implications, efficiency and effectiveness gains to date in the form of a chart at the fall inter-sessional meeting on the budget matters as called for in decision 1996/32. The Director of Change Management pointed out that the "Strategy outline for the 1998-99 budget" (E/ICEF/1997/CRP.28) contained a full description of principles used to guide budget decisions and summarized key realignments in country, regional and headquarters offices.

479. The Executive Director pointed out that, since the responsibility for management excellence had been mainstreamed within UNICEF and was no longer a separate programme, reports on management excellence should be part of the organization's general work and suggested that reporting on management excellence may not be needed as a separate item past June 1998. A few delegations foresaw the need for continued reporting, however, spread over longer periods. Although a wealth of information on MEP had been provided and reporting on progress had been mainstreamed, there was still a need for the full picture of what MEP had achieved and what remained to be done.

480. A number of delegations suggested that an effort be made to measure the impact of MEP and its contribution to making UNICEF more efficient and effective at delivering programmes. In this connection, it was suggested that a report on the results of this assessment be presented to the Board at the 1998 annual session. Two speakers requested that the report also include the impact of MEP within the context of a new United Nations system. One delegation requested that progress on the implementation of the oversight system be included in the MEP report. The suggestions were noted by the Director of Change Management, including the need to convey examples of where and how improvements have taken place.

481. One speaker inquired about systems in place to collect and disseminate information to the Board on UNICEF performance. The Director of Change Management reported that opportunities for results to be communicated to the Board included the reports on mid-term reviews and major evaluations from the regions, the follow-up to the World Summit for Children goals and the proposed annual audit report. One speaker suggested that the key social indicators collected by UNICEF be made available on the Internet, to which the secretariat replied that a web page had been created containing all major UNICEF publications and social indicators.

482. The importance of assessing the impact of organizational goals and indicators of achievement was emphasized by one delegation. Two speakers pointed to the need to strengthen end-of-cycle and ex-post evaluations. The Director, EPP, noted that the secretariat did measure impact as well as process, citing recent examples of evaluations of the impact of vitamin A supplementation and infant mortality. Responding to a query, the Director, OIA, acknowledged the challenge in measuring programme delivery within a rights-based framework, but said that the Office was currently developing and testing a methodology for programme audits to assess achievements against set programme objectives.

483. One speaker had wanted to see more emphasis in the report on development results achieved by UNICEF programmes and country-level coordination and cooperation within the United Nations system. This speaker suggested that

collaboration with other United Nations agencies should be a criteria in measuring country office performance. The Director, EPP, informed Board members of the importance placed on joint evaluative activities with other agencies and referred to the planned joint evaluation of activities in the Great Lakes region together with UNHCR and UNDP as an example. She also highlighted the proposed UNDAF as providing new possibilities to improve coordination.

484. Several speakers asked about the role of evaluation in the planning process. The Director, EPP, stated that strategic planning was a cyclical process with external and internal analysis of efforts to improve the situation of children and women. Through this process, UNICEF drew on best lessons and practices, identified priorities and translated these priorities into country programmes. She also pointed out the importance of programme priorities driving the budget as opposed to the other way around.

485. Several delegations expressed support for strengthening OIA and encouraged the preventative approach being taken. In supporting the strengthening of both audit and evaluation functions, one speaker reminded the Board of the need for continued priority to be on programme implementation. A number of delegations welcomed UNICEF collaboration with Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Board of External Auditors.

486. Many speakers were pleased with the Executive Director's recommendation that a report on internal audit activities be presented to the Board annually. It was suggested that the report also include problems encountered and corrective measures taken.

487. One speaker welcomed the central database on audit recommendations, while another recounted how through experience it was found that efforts to strengthen the implementation of audit recommendations were best addressed by line management. The Director, OIA, responded that the database was a tool for monitoring the implementation of audit recommendations and that implementation of the recommendations was also followed up for verification. He noted having seen considerable progress in the follow-up to audit recommendations and pointed out that the annual audit report would provide an indication of improvements made. (See chapter III, decision 1997/28, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

Partnership between the Executive Board and the secretariat

488. The Executive Board had before it a report containing proposed guidelines for an effective partnership between the Executive Board and the secretariat (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.13), which was prepared by a so-called "Group of Volunteers". Two members of the Group introduced the report, saying that Group, composed of five individuals, had begun meeting in 1996 and had held consultations with other Board members and with the secretariat and had prepared a report suggesting guidelines for the respective competencies of the Board and secretariat. The proposed guidelines divided issues between the Board and secretariat into three categories: for decision by the Board; for consultation with the Board; and for the Board's information only. It was also suggested that the Bureau be responsible for certain decisions or consultations.

489. The Executive Director said that the Group's work was an attempt to achieve clarity about the Board's policy, strategy and oversight role, which was stressed both by the Booz•Allen and Hamilton study and General Assembly resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993. She attached the highest priority to ensuring a harmonious working relationship with the Executive Board and found both its formal sessions and inter-sessional meetings to be very useful in clarifying the secretariat's thinking about policies. The proposed categories

of interaction were very useful, especially the one that would allow for consultation.

490. She did have some differences with parts of the report, specifically that the Bureau should be involved in some aspects of the recruitment process and that the Secretary of the Executive Board was accountable to the Board. The Executive Director was herself accountable to the Board and responsible for ensuring the necessary performance of the Secretary of the Board and her office.

491. A number of delegations said that while the relationship between the Board and secretariat had improved in recent years, the guidelines could provide a useful orientation and improve efficiency, although they would have to be applied flexibly. Some delegations said that the Board should still have the right to designate important issues for decision or consultation even if they were designated for information by the secretariat, or to add issues not covered in the report. Some delegations said that the relationship should be viewed in terms of action and results, especially at country level.

492. Comments were also made on some of the specific proposals made by the "Group of Volunteers". Two speakers completely disagreed with the proposals for any exclusive role for the Bureau, which was only a channel for information, and said that any larger role could lead to unequal access and lack of transparency. Another delegation raised questions about certain issues that were designated for consultation instead of for decision by the Board, especially the MTP and financial plan. It was also suggested that the issue of the location of regional offices be the subject of consultation with members from the regions concerned and then reported to the Board.

493. Responding to the Executive Director's comments, many delegations agreed that the Board should focus on policy, avoid micromanagement and recognize that the Executive Director was responsible for personnel issues. However, one speaker said that the Executive Director's views on the appointment of the Secretary of the Board were contrary to the procedures of other international organizations.

494. The question of having rules of procedure to govern the relationship between the Board and secretariat was raised by several speakers, one of whom said that the rules should be given first priority in preparing the relationship guidelines. One speaker added that the guidelines for the relationship between the Board and secretariat should also have a mechanism for involving national authorities at country level. It was felt that future work should be based on principles and a rationale governing the relationship between the Board and secretariat. Using a set of principles would allow more flexibility under different circumstances, for example, any changes emanating from the Track II reforms proposed by the Secretary-General.

495. There were a number of suggestions as to how to proceed. It was said that the suggested guidelines were already out of date because of United Nations reform and proposals for coordination between the funds and programmes. Other delegations said that more and wider consultation was needed before the guidelines could be adopted, but several speakers said that the decision should not be delayed too long. It was also proposed that the guidelines be adopted on a provisional basis for a test period.

496. Members of the "Group of Volunteers" said that they found many of the comments to be positive and that the exercise should be seen in the context of the improved relationship between Board and secretariat in recent years. As for the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, they had been revised in 1994 in the light of General Assembly resolution 48/162, but could be changed in keeping

with new situations. (See chapter III, decision 1997/29, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

D. Supply operations

497. In introducing the report on supply operations (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.14), the Director of Supply Division said that following a management study on the supply function and in line with MEP, the Division had embarked on a process of change for the supply function with the objective of defining the best way supplies can support development. She said that the strategic goals of Supply Division were: to support child rights programmes in the field through child-focused technical developments; and to give UNICEF the best value for its money through optimal contracts with manufacturers and service providers. She reported on key achievements over the last year and plans and activities of supply operations in the medium-term as well as in emergency situations. Within the framework of United Nations reform, Supply Division had represented UNICEF in the United Nations Common Services Working Group on Procurement, and she described some of the activities initiated by the Division in the spirit of the reform process.

498. There was strong endorsement of the aims and priority actions for the supply function as described in the report. The child rights-based approach was approved by several delegations. Establishment of a knowledge centre also met with general approval. The existence of a work plan, outlining objectives for the coming year, was queried. The Director of Supply Division informed the Executive Board that there was a multi-year work plan which included objectives for the supply function at headquarters level initially, expanding to regional and local level in the second year and third years.

499. There was unanimous support for the emphasis on capacity-building at local levels, with major commodities being purchased at headquarters level. Some delegations questioned the adequacy of resources within UNICEF for such capacity-building activities, while others linked this with a need for increased efforts to coordinate with other United Nations agencies to ensure that agency strengths were maximized and duplication of procurement avoided. The Director advised that capacity-building could only be approached gradually, and that a pilot project approach had been adopted.

500. Ongoing collaboration with the United Nations on the reform process was supported unanimously. In this connection, the Director noted that priority was being given to participation in the weekly meetings of the United Nations Working Group on Common Services for Procurement. Current activities included establishment of a database on United Nations agency procurement at headquarters level, which would facilitate strategic planning on procurement. The database would then be expanded to include procurement at local level.

501. In the Director's reply to a question on competitive tendering procedure, the Executive Board was informed that all potential suppliers must be pre-qualified on aspects such as financial stability, production capacity and quality performance. They are then invited to compete, and a long-term arrangement is established, whenever appropriate, with the successful bidder.

502. Several delegations urged greater efforts to increase local procurement, although some concern was expressed on the issue of procurement from under-utilized donors. Other delegates felt that cost-effectiveness should be the major focus in procurement decisions. The Director of Supply Division responded that worldwide guidelines for local procurement were currently under review in conjunction with the review of capacity.

503. Quality assurance was another concern brought out by some delegations, together with the need for end-user evaluation of goods supplied. This concern was shared by Supply Division, which is establishing a new quality assurance centre at UNICEF Copenhagen with additional staff resources. The Division is also working with country offices to expand quality assurance training. End-user evaluation has been an ongoing effort of the Division. There are plans to expand this effort as a part of capacity-building and as part of plans to improve in-country logistics.

504. The Director welcomed the suggestion of one delegation, for a review of progress of the supply reorganization in two or three years. (See chapter III, decision 1997/23, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

E. Financial medium-term plan for the period 1997-2000

505. The financial MTP (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.10) was introduced by the Deputy Executive Director, who provided a brief summary on income and expenditure forecast for the period 1997-2000 in the context of a very difficult and uncertain funding environment.

506. Several delegations expressed concern that income was declining due to decreasing contributions and the adverse impact of a strong United States dollar. One delegation stated that continued good work by the organization despite declining resources was testimony to the quality of its programmes. Another delegation stated that world-wide ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child had resulted in increased programme activities for children, thereby requiring more resources than before. The same delegation further pointed out that most developing countries have already channelled their political will and meager resources to the effort, and expressed its hope that developed countries would encourage this effort by allocating more resources.

507. One delegation expressed concern that all promises made at international conferences such as the World Summit for Children and Social Development Summit regarding resources were not kept and reminded members that it was the responsibility of all to make resources available. Another delegation stated that the rights of children to a "first call" on resources should continue undiminished and pleaded with all donors to be much more responsive to children's needs. The same delegation stated that donors should take into account the emergence of new areas of need (Central and Eastern Europe/CIS) and conflict when pledging contributions and urged that more emphasis be placed on increasing resources as opposed to the redistribution of existing resources.

508. One delegation stated that while income projections for the 1997-2000 period gave reason for concern, they should not be taken as facts as there were indications that some donors might reconsider their decision to reduce contributions. Another delegation stated that UNICEF had addressed the funding problem in a rational manner and that the situation was not hopeless.

509. Several delegations called for a more vigorous fund-raising strategy. Two delegations specifically asked what alternative resource mobilization strategy the secretariat had considered to combat declining income. The secretariat explained that it had a fine track record on resource mobilization owing to its highly sophisticated private sector fund-raising apparatus and continuous advocacy with Governments. The secretariat also explained that greeting cards and other private sector activities were looking increasingly into other options/avenues to increase income. Fund-raising in developing countries such as Brazil and Thailand and expanding markets for the greeting card business were cited as examples of new efforts in this direction.

510. Two delegations stated that income projections in the financial MTP were over-optimistic, while another described the same forecast as cautious and conservative. One delegation pointed out that slight increases in income projections were mainly in supplementary funds rather than general resources and added that emphasis should have been on the latter rather than the former. One delegation specifically requested justifications for the 3 per cent increase in income forecast for the period 1998-2000 when figures for 1997 were actually below 1996. The secretariat responded that it regarded the 3 per cent increase in income forecast as conservative since it showed only moderate growth.

511. Some delegations noted that the support budget showed a marginal increase for the period 1997-2000. One delegation questioned reason for 14 per cent increase in support budget in 1996, while income was decreasing by 7 per cent for the same period. The secretariat responded that the increase in the 1996 support budget was due mainly to the shifting of previous global funds for headquarters and regional offices from the programme budget to the support budget in line with the integrated budget for headquarters and regional offices approved by the Board during its second regular session of 1996. The secretariat added that the increase in support budget from 1998 onwards was due to implementation of the Board's decision on general resources allocation, which introduced support budgets to 25 countries that were previously funded out of the programme budget.

512. One delegation stated that the year-end convertible cash balance was rather high and wanted to know whether this was anomalous or cyclical. Another delegation also stated that it found the year-end cash balance, particularly supplementary funds, considerably higher at this time of declining resources, and expressed its concern that this might create the impression that UNICEF was not channelling funds into activities benefiting children. In response, the secretariat said that since supplementary funds programmes were meant to be fully funded, more cash was received ahead than for general resources, but usually during the last quarter of the year. This required the bulk of such contributions to be earmarked for implementation in the following year. (See chapter III, decision 1997/24, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

F. Preview of the 1998-1999 integrated budget

513. The Executive Board considered the following documents:

(a) "Strategy outline for the 1998-1999 budget" (E/ICEF/1997/CRP.28);

(b) "Interim budget allocation for January 1998" (E/ICEF/1997/CRP.29).

514. The Executive Director provided the Board with an overview of financial and staffing issues as they are now. The presentation was supplemented by a chart showing the growth during 1990-1995 in both income (+23 per cent) and total posts (+28 per cent). In 1995, a peak was reached with $1.011 billion in annual income and 6,223 posts worldwide. Since then, looking at 1995-1997, income has dropped (-10 per cent) and reductions in staff have followed (-2 per cent). New and revised income projections for 1998-1999 are not very optimistic, and more reductions will be proposed for 1998-1999 to bring posts and other support budget costs in line with available resources. More cost-saving measures, as approved in the "Integrated budget for headquarters and regional offices for 1996-1997" (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.5), have already been implemented.

515. The Deputy Executive Director continued the presentation with a description of the legislative framework that will be applied to the process of

abolishing posts. United Nations minimum requirements will be met and, in many points, exceeded, all with the purpose of lessening the impact on individual employees. The Executive Director gave a summary presentation of the specific support given to affected staff. The support package included giving advance notice, a voluntary separation scheme, transition support and counselling, and special placement reviews. The voluntary separation scheme is designed primarily for General Service staff at headquarters, and other locally recruited staff in some duty stations outside New York, since they have fewer opportunities within UNICEF for a new job. Finally, a preliminary forecast of regional and functional distributions of posts in the 1998-1999 budget period was presented.

516. Concern for the staff situation in the present climate of declining resources and posts was expressed by many delegations. The actual number of posts to be abolished was unclear to many. Several speakers requested clarification on the principles applied when posts were abolished and an explanation of the actual cause - the MEP process or the declining resources. Some delegations requested UNICEF to bear in mind equitable geographical and gender representation, and one delegation requested statistical information on personnel receiving termination notices. Finally, the secretariat was requested to report on the total cost implication of terminations, voluntary separations and indemnity payments.

517. The Executive Director replied that the requested information would be made available at an inter-sessional meeting before the Executive Board budget discussion in January 1998. She said that the secretariat was committed to improving communication on these issues and would continue to work closely with the staff associations.

518. Several delegations expressed a need for more concrete reporting on the regionalization process. A primary concern was related to the division of responsibilities between headquarters, regional offices and country offices. They asked the secretariat for a comprehensive overview of the actual cost savings and efficiency improvements. The projected decline in resources and staff raised much concern about the impact on quality programme delivery and, consequently, on the ability of UNICEF to retain the confidence of donors in Governments and the private sector.

519. The Executive Director said that regionalization did not mean that there would be more people everywhere and that activities had been moved from headquarters to the field. Key issues from the report on "Integrated budgeting in UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.4), which was approved by the Board at its first regular session in 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/12/Rev.1, decision 1997/3), were highlighted where the CPMP process and the linkage between staffing needs and programmes was explained. The four guiding principles for the 1998-1999 budget were being implemented throughout the organization. The focus was on country programme centrality, the decentralization process, linking objectives to the budget and investments in systems. Management plans of headquarter divisions were presented in an "Open Forum" in New York. Programme and budget reviews for country offices were delegated to the regions. The new consultative process was a decentralized "country up" process of setting priorities to all activities, thus preventing a thinning of resources and maintaining a commitment to delivering quality programmes in the field.

520. The strategy outline for the 1998-1999 budget was welcomed and endorsed by several delegations, which supported the ongoing MEP realignment and trusted the secretariat to manage the difficult decisions to be taken in the current environment of decline. They urged Board members to focus on securing governmental funds, not on getting too involved in micro-management.

521. The secretariat submitted a proposal for an interim budget allocation in the amount of $22.0 million for the month of January 1998 (E/ICEF/1997/CRP.29) pending the approval of the biennial budget for 1998-1999. (See chapter III, decision 1997/25, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

G. UNICEF interim financial report and statements

522. The Deputy Executive Director introduced the interim financial report and statements (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.11). She said that UNICEF has had a biennial financial report since 1988 and that this was the first year of the biennium. Presented to the Board for information, the report contained details on income and expenditures, assets and liabilities, reserves and fund balances at the end of 1996. The Board would receive the final report on the 1996-1997 biennium, along with an audit report, at the September 1998 session or, based on the availability of the report of the Board of Auditors and Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, possibly the first regular session of 1999. (See chapter III, decision 1997/26, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

H. Oral report on decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council

523. The Director of United Nations Affairs and External Relations reported on the resolutions and decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997 with direct implications for both the secretariat and Executive Board of UNICEF.

524. He spoke about resolution 1997/59 of 24 July 1997 on "Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly", which recognized the obligation of the Council to make recommendations on issues of financing. This was based on the concern expressed about the insufficiency of resources and that the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities must be enhanced by a substantial increase in funding that should be on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. In this regard, the Council recommended that the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes review and monitor funding arrangements with a view to making funding more secure and predictable and called upon the Boards to take decisions on funding arrangements and report back to the Council in 1998. The resolution also called for an increased focus on a number of key programming areas, including sustainable capacity-building, the programme approach, strengthening national execution and more systemwide coordination of monitoring and evaluation activities. UNICEF will have an input in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on implementation of this resolution.

525. In its resolution on UNAIDS, the Council called upon the co-sponsors of UNAIDS, UNICEF being one of them, to: (a) strengthen their commitment to a response to AIDS through their programmes and through follow-up to international conferences; (b) disseminate clear guidance to their country-level staff on the role and functions of HIV/AIDS theme groups; and (c) report back to their respective governing bodies on measures taken in this respect. The co-sponsors were also requested to share the cost of administrative support for these theme groups within the framework of the resident coordinator system.

526. He mentioned four Council resolutions that dealt with follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits:

(a) Resolution 1997/302 of 25 July 1997, which called for a two- to three-day session of the Council in early 1998 to consider the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the work of the inter-agency task forces on the follow-up to international conferences and summits, leading to a broader discussion of the subject at the substantive session in 1998;

(b) Resolution 1997/60 of 25 July 1997, which called for work on the eradication of poverty and highlighted contributions to the General Assembly meeting in the year 2000 for the overall review of the Social Summit and the five-year review of the Beijing Programme of Action;

(c) Resolution 1997/61 of 25 July 1997, which was used to bring the results of Habitat II and the World Food Summit into the integrated and coordinated follow-up process (UNICEF was participating in the working groups established for that purpose);

(d) Resolution 1997/42 of 22 July 1997 on follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), in which the Council called for the General Assembly to consider how a special session would be convened in 1999 (UNICEF had already participated in a first inter-agency meeting on this matter and would prepare a paper for the 1998 annual session on UNICEF activities in support of the ICPD goals).

527. Several other resolutions were noted dealing with the following subjects: (a) International Year of the Volunteers (2001) - UNICEF had notified the United Nations Volunteers of its support for the event and that it would participate as appropriate; (b) World Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth and follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond - all United Nations organizations were expected to participate in the preparations for this conference and to implement the action plan of the World Programme in accordance with their own experience, situation and priorities, which UNICEF was doing; and (c) participation of NGOs in the General Assembly, which was deferred until after the Assembly could deliberate on the issue.

528. The theme of the high-level segment was on "Fostering an enabling environment for development: financial flows, including capital flows; investment; trade", and the Council was able to produce agreed conclusions which included areas of interest to UNICEF such as the right to development, participation by civil society, a focus on official development assistance as an essential source of external funding and the need to reverse its overall decline, etc. There was also a reference to the external debt situation and the urgent need for action in this area and a durable solution to the debt and debt servicing problem.

529. Delegations expressed appreciation for the clear and concise verbal report, with some of them commending the Executive Director and her team for their active and constructive participation in the substantive session of the Council, including during the operational activities segment. Delegations suggested several topics for the next report on follow-up to Council decisions, including UNAIDS, water and gender.

530. A number of speakers stressed the need for a strategy paper for resource mobilization, both because of the downward trend in finances and to respond to the decision on funding arrangements adopted by the Council at its substantive session.

531. Turning to the question of timing for the discussion on resource mobilization and translation needs, the secretariat explained that an informal conference room paper would require little lead time and could incorporate up-to-the-minute information. On the other hand, a formal written document would have to be translated and, therefore, would require a longer lead time. One delegation reminded the Board that the Council decision required that a

formal written report be prepared. The timing of its presentation could be at the annual session if that allows for the proper lead time for the submission of documents to the United Nations. The secretariat agreed to produce an oral report for the first regular session of 1998, to be followed by a detailed written report at a subsequent session.

I. World Health Organization/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund Coordinating Committee on Health: proposed terms of reference

532. Under this agenda item, the Executive Board reviewed the proposed terms of reference (TORs) for the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA CCH (E/ICEF/1997/21), which were introduced by the Deputy Executive Director. He said that the proposed TORs, which had been approved by the WHO Executive Board in May 1997, were being submitted to the Board for approval or amendment and would be submitted to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board the following week. It was explained that any amendments would have to go before the other Executive Boards so that they could endorse the same TORs. He added that the report of the final session of the Joint Committee on Health Policy (E/ICEF/1997/19), which had wound up its work in May, was also before the Board for comment.

533. Many speakers addressed this agenda item. One delegation said that the TORs did not include any mention of the most important function of CCH, which was to coordinate the health policies and programmes of the three agencies. Another speaker, supported by many others, said that CCH would provide a mechanism for coordination and identify possibilities for increased cooperation between the three agencies on maternal, child and women's health. Commenting on the TORs, he said that they were vague and did not refer to other agencies that were involved in health policy, especially UNAIDS and the World Bank. It was also felt that the implied focus on reproductive health, or that reproductive and sexual health were not part of women's or adolescent health, was misleading. Other delegations also suggested amending the TORs to refer to child and maternal mortality.

534. Another speaker said that in decision 1997/8, adopted at the first regular session in January, it was stated that the members of CCH, drawing on the experience of the three secretariats and the comments made at that session, would review the role and mandate of the committee and put forward proposals for revised TORs and operating methods. However, the three secretariats had actually drafted the TORs, which subsequently were approved by the WHO Executive Board. He was not sure that CCH had actually met to discuss its own TORs, as requested in the decision.

535. Some delegations said that the Board should approve the TORs as they were the product of a careful process of consultation among the three agencies, and not approving them would delay the operationalization of the Committee. The Board should just advise the Committee of its concerns, leaving the question of working methods for the Committee itself to determine. (See chapter III, decision 1997/27, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

J. Programme of work for 1998

536. The Secretary of the Executive Board introduced this agenda item. She provided a brief outline of the basic principles established during the past two years that guided the formulation of the programme of work. Delegations commented extensively on both the proposed agenda items and documentation for 1998 Board sessions. In response to a request to include a wider discussion of UNICEF cooperation with NGOs and civil society, it was agreed that this subject would be included in the oral report on implementation of the policy regarding National Committees.

537. The programme of work presented by the secretariat (E/ICEF/1997/CRP.27) contained a reduction in the number of sessions for 1998 from four to three based on a rationalization of agenda items, which the Board approved. It was approved on the understanding that the burden of work would guide the number of sessions, i.e., the number of sessions would be decided year by year based on the programme of work. (See chapter III, decision 1997/30, for the dates of Board sessions and the programme of work for 1998 as adopted by the Executive Board.)

K. Other matters

538. The President announced that the Bureau, in consultation with the secretariat, had decided that the Executive Board's field trips for 1998 would be to Bangladesh and to Guinea and Mali. By mid-October, the secretariat would share an information paper with members describing the proposed programmes and dates for the two visits. The regional groups would have to notify the secretariat of the names of their participants by the end of November.

L. Concluding remarks

539. The Executive Director said that once again, she had found the Executive Board session to be a useful forum for dialogue. She appreciated the support expressed by delegations throughout the session for the work being done by UNICEF both at headquarters and in the field. At the same time, the secretariat had listened very closely to delegations' concerns about the level of financial resources, staffing issues and budget-related questions, which would be the subject of inter-sessional meetings. These were not easy questions to resolve, but the secretariat would continue to work with the Board to reach consensus on them. The secretariat was ready to assist the "Group of Volunteers" in its work on improving the partnership between the Board and the secretariat. In closing, she thanked the President for her leadership, humor and insightfulness throughout the year. She also thanked the outgoing members of the Board for their contribution and reminded them that they would be welcome as active observers next year.

540. Reflecting on her experience in the past year, the President said that the Board was in a time of change. Ten years ago, when she had been a member, the Board had discussed poverty and inequality in a climate of expectations, when there were options and alternatives. Many said that the 1980s were a lost decade, but they were also a time when the world became aware of many realities. Now, conditions were very different. For example, concerns for the staff of UNICEF were similar to concerns expressed in all counties about job security.

541. Another change was the growing importance of civil society. She had worked for more than 30 years in public administration and the university, and saw that there was now a growing need for new partners, hence the emergence of civil society. In Europe, civil society had arisen as nations had been created. However, today in many of countries, civil society was arising in the face of the incapacity of institutions and administrations to respond to the needs of populations. In the face of growing problems, there had to be strategic alliances between Governments and civil society to resolve them.

542. She said that there was a need to build an attitude of trust and look for alternatives. In the market economy, it was clear that the middle class did not have very defined space and that the gap between the rich and poor was growing. At the same time, this was probably the first time that mankind had overcome the problem of well-being in the developed countries. Now, society had to redistribute the benefits and look for fairness, even though there had never been less solidarity than now. Funds for cooperation were decreasing and

problems with mobilizing resources were increasing. Society spoke less and less of development. In this climate, it was very important that members of the Board remained in close contact, even between sessions. Finally, in the reform of the United Nations system, countries must not lose sight of the fact that the Organization continued to be the only place where they could gather together with their differences, diversity and confrontations. It was the only possibility to learn from each other.

Annex

DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD DURING 1997

Number	Title
	First regular session
1997/1.	Progress report on follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 and 1996/33
1997/2.	Report on the audit of the Kenya country office
1997/3.	Integrated budgeting in UNICEF
1997/4.	Headquarters and regional offices budget for the biennium 1996-1997
1997/5.	Harmonization of budget presentations: UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF
1997/6.	Financial matters
1997/7.	Children and women in emergencies: strategic priorities and operational concerns for UNICEF
1997/8.	Coordination in health policy and programmes
1997/9.	Implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF
1997/10.	Implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors
	Second regular session
1997/11.	Annual report to the Economic and Social Council
1997/12.	1997 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award
1997/13.	Election of Executive Board representatives to the joint committees for the 1997-1998 biennium
	Annual session
1997/14.	Greeting Card and related Operations work plan and proposed budget for the eight-month period 1 May to 31 December 1997
1997/15.	Greeting Card and related Operations financial report and statements for the year ended 30 April 1996
1997/16.	Report on the meeting of the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education
1997/17.	Report on the meeting of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy

Annex (continued)

Number	Title
1997/18.	Modified system for allocation of general resources for programmes
1997/19.	Ensuring children's rights to survival, development and protection in Africa
1997/20.	Follow-up to the World Summit for Children
1997/21.	Implementation of UNICEF policies and strategies on children in need of special protection measures

Third regular session

Number	Title
1997/22.	Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation
1997/23.	Supply operations
1997/24.	Financial medium-term plan for the period 1997-2000
1997/25.	Interim budget allocation for January 1998
1997/26.	Interim financial report and statements
1997/27.	Proposed terms of reference of the World Health Organization/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund Coordinating Committee on Health
1997/28.	Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF
1997/29.	Effective partnership between the Executive Board and the secretariat of UNICEF
1997/30.	Programme of work for 1998

First regular session

1997/1. Progress report on follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 and 1996/33

The Executive Board

Takes note of the "Progress report on follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 and 1996/33: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (E/ICEF/1997/5) and decides to transmit it, together with comments made by delegations at the present session, to the Secretary-General for inclusion in his report on this subject to the Council at its substantive session of 1997.

First regular session
21 January 1997

1997/2. Report on the audit of the Kenya country office

The Executive Board

Takes note of the "Report on the audit of the Kenya country office by the Office of Internal Audit" (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.2), with the understanding that the secretariat will issue a final report on this subject at the appropriate time.

First regular session
21 January 1997

1997/3. Integrated budgeting in UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report on "Integrated budgeting in UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.4) and the comments made by delegations;

2. Takes into account that the requirement for the "Biennial support budget" submission to the September 1997 session of the Board, in accordance with decision 1995/31 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), would require the scheduling of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions review in May 1997 before the completion of the country programme recommendation (CPR) process in June 1997;

3. Agrees that the "Support budget" should not be formulated before the programme has been sufficiently articulated through the development of the master plan of operations and the draft CPR;

4. Decides that, in order to maintain the integrity of both the CPR and the integrated budget processes, the "Biennial support budget" for 1998-1999, on an exceptional basis, be reviewed by the Executive Board at its first regular session in January 1998;

5. Requests the secretariat to continue consultations with the Executive Board concerning scheduling coordination with a view to presenting future biennial budgets before the beginning of the biennium.

First regular session
22 January 1997

1997/4. Headquarters and regional offices budget for the biennium 1996-1997

The Executive Board

Resolves:

(a) That $470,000 will be transferred from approved Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO) budgets for 1 May 1996 to 30 April 1997 and an additional $945,000 will be added to the headquarters and regional offices budget for the biennium 1996-1997. The total amount of $1,415,000 covers the costs of the posts and general operating costs for activities transferred from GCO;

(b) With the above, the headquarters and regional offices budget for the biennium 1996-1997 is approved as follows:

		(In thousands of United States dollars)
Part I	Programme assistance	5 707
Part II	Programme support	168 946
Part III	Management and administration	172 762
	Total expenditure	347 415

(c) That for the biennium 1996-1997, a commitment of $347,415,000 for the budget is approved;

(d) That the Executive Director be authorized to administer in the most efficient manner the provisions under each of parts I, II and III. The Executive Director may be authorized, without further authorization of the Executive Board, to transfer, if necessary, into any one of parts I, II and III, an amount not exceeding 5 per cent from these same parts, or to transfer into part I any amounts from parts II or III. The amount in part II may be revised upward or downward in line with the recovery from packing and assembly activities (E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1, decision 1996/11). In exceptional circumstances, the Executive Board may be consulted by mail poll.

First regular session
22 January 1997

1997/5. Harmonization of budget presentations: UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF

The Executive Board

Approves the proposed format for the future Biennial support budget as contained in document DP/1997/2, E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.3.

First regular session
23 January 1997

1997/6. Financial matters

The Executive Board

Takes note of the following reports:

(a) "UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 1995 and report of the Board of Auditors" (Supplement No. 5B (A/51/5/Add.2));

(b) "Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions" (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.14).

First regular session
23 January 1997

1997/7. Children and women in emergencies: strategic priorities and operational concerns for UNICEF

The Executive Board,

Having reviewed the report on "Children and women in emergencies: strategic priorities and operational concerns for UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1997/7) and recalling General Assembly resolution 51/77 of 12 December 1996 on the rights of the child, in particular those paragraphs which stress the specific role of UNICEF,

1. Endorses the approach set out in the report and requests the Executive Director, in implementing the approach and in elaborating operational guidelines, to take duly into consideration the views and concerns expressed by delegations at the present session;

2. Further requests the Executive Director to report back to the Board on the experiences gained through the approach and the guidelines at its first regular session of 2000.

First regular session
23 January 1997

1997/8. Coordination in health policy and programmes

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes decision EB99.R23 of 22 January 1997 adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board at its Ninety-ninth Session and decision 97/1 of 16 January 1997 adopted by the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund (UNDP/UNFPA) Executive Board at its first regular session in 1997 on the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health;

2. Takes note of document E/ICEF/1997/6 of 11 November 1996 on the "Participation of the Executive Board of the United Nations Population Fund in the United Nations Children's Fund/World Health Organization Joint Committee on Health Policy";

3. Recommends that the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board become a member of the Joint Committee on Health Policy to be named WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health;

4. *Requests* that, as an item on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of this reconstituted body, its members, drawing on the collective expertise and experience of the secretariats of the three organizations concerned, as well as on the discussions of the UNICEF Executive Board at the present session, review the role and mandate of the committee and put forward proposals for revised terms of reference and operating methods to be included in the report on the meeting and submitted for approval to the Executive Boards of the three organizations.

First regular session
23 January 1997

1997/9. *Implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF*

The Executive Board,

Having reviewed the report on the "Implementation plan of the health strategy for UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1997/3),

1. *Strongly reaffirms* the commitment of UNICEF to improving children's health, to achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children and to implementing the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

2. *Endorses* the overall approach for implementing the health strategy as contained in the document and *requests* the Executive Director, in applying the approach and in elaborating operational guidelines, to take into account the views and concerns expressed by delegations at the present session;

3. *Stresses* that national Governments have the fundamental responsibility for the design and implementation of their national health strategies and for coordinating external assistance in accordance with national health priorities;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director to encourage Governments, the international community, non-governmental organizations and other actors in civil society to mobilize more resources for the implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director to report, orally in 1998 and 1999 and in writing in 2000, to the Executive Board on progress made in the implementation of the health strategy.

First regular session
24 January 1997

1997/10. *Implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors*

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the comments made by the United Nations Children's Fund in document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.14 in response to the recommendations made in the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for the biennium 1994-1995 (Supplement No. 5B (A/51/5/Add.2));

2. *Requests* the secretariat to provide the Executive Board, at its first regular session in 1998, with an oral update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and an updated timetable indicating the dates when follow-up action will have been completed in the areas that need to be addressed;

3. Requests the secretariat to provide an oral update on the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors at each first regular session of the Executive Board in the year when no written report is provided.

First regular session
24 January 1997

Second regular session

1997/11. Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the "Report of the Executive Director: Annual report to the Economic and Social Council" (E/ICEF/1997/10 (Part I)) and of document E/ICEF/1997/4 on "Follow-up to the decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996", which is on a related subject and was considered by the Board at its first regular session of 1997;

2. Decides to transmit the reports, together with the comments made at both sessions, to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its 1997 substantive session.

Second regular session
18 March 1997

1997/12. 1997 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

The Executive Board

1. Decides to present the 1997 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award to the Legal Assistance Centre of Namibia;

2. Approves an allocation of $25,000 from general resources for that purpose.

Second regular session
18 March 1997

1997/13. Election of Executive Board representatives to the joint committees for the 1997-1998 biennium

The Executive Board

1. Decides to elect the following members and alternates to the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee on Health Policy (to be reconstituted as the WHO/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund Coordinating Committee on Health) for the 1997-1998 biennium:

(a) From the African group of States, Dr. Patrick Yowasi Kadama as member and Mrs. Harriet Mugerwa as alternate (Uganda);

(b) From the Asian group of States, Dr. Ali J. Bin Mohammed Suleiman as member and Dr. Saleh M. Salim Al-Khussaiby as alternate (Oman);

(c) From the Eastern European group of States, Dr. Petr Struk as member and Dr. Jan Janda as alternate (Czech Republic);

(d) From the Western European and Others group of States, Dr. David Nabarro as member and Dr. Penelope Key as alternate (United Kingdom);

2. Decides to elect the following members and alternates to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education for the 1997-1998 biennium:

(a) From the Eastern European group of States, Professor Alexander S. Kondratjev as member and Dr. Galina S. Kovaleva as alternate (Russian Federation);

(b) From the Western European and Others group of States, Dr. François Remy as member and Mr. Jean-Pierre Regnier as alternate (France);

3. Agrees that the candidates to be proposed by the regional groups that have not yet submitted nominations to the joint committees will be considered elected upon receipt by the secretariat of a letter from the Chairman of the respective regional group confirming the nominations.

Second regular session
19 March 1997

Annual session

1997/14. Greeting Card and related Operations work plan and proposed budget for the eight-month period 1 May to 31 December 1997

A. Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO) budgeted expenditures for the 1997 season

The Executive Board

1. Approves for the fiscal period 1 May to 31 December 1997 budgeted expenditures of $85.3 million as detailed below and summarized in column II of annex I to document E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.8:

	(In millions of United States dollars)
Director's Office	0.3
Product Line and Marketing	55.2
Private Sector Fund-raising	7.9
Operations and Finance	9.8
Subtotal	73.2
Non-operating expenses:	
Market Development Programme (MDP)	3.0
Fund-raising Development Programme (FDP)	7.8
GCO share in UNICEF administrative costs	0.6
Central and Eastern European National Committees Development Programme	0.7
Subtotal	12.1
Total expenditures, consolidated a/	85.3

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a/ For details see E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.8, table 2.

2. Authorizes the Executive Director:

(a) To incur expenditures as summarized in column II of annex I to document E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.8 and to increase the expenditures up to the level indicated in column III of annex I to the same document, should the apparent net proceeds from product sales and/or private sector fund-raising increase to the levels indicated in column III of annex I, and, accordingly, to reduce expenditures below the level indicated in column II to the extent necessary, should the net proceeds decrease;

(b) To transfer funds when necessary between the various budgets as detailed above;

(c) To spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, owing to currency fluctuations, to ensure the continued operation of GCO.

B. Budgeted income for the 1997 season

The Executive Board

Notes that for the fiscal period 1 May to 31 December 1997, GCO net proceeds are budgeted at $259.9 million as shown in column II of annex I to document E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.8.

C. Policy issues

The Executive Board

1. Approves the changes in posts with a net decrease of nine posts as indicated in annexes IV and VI of document E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.8;

2. Renews MDP with $3.0 million established for 1997;

3. Renews FDP with $7.8 established for 1997;

4. Renews the Central and Eastern European National Committees Development Programme, which includes 10 countries, with a budget of $0.7 million established for 1997;

5. Authorizes the Executive Director to incur expenditures in the 1997 fiscal period related to cost of goods delivered (production/purchase of raw materials, cards and other products) for the 1998 fiscal year up to $42.3 million as indicated in the GCO medium-term plan (see table 8 of document E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.8).

Annual session
5 June 1997

1997/15. Greeting Card and related Operations financial report and statements for the year ended 30 April 1996

The Executive Board

Takes note of the Greeting Card and related Operations financial report and statements for the year ended 30 April 1996 (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.9).

Annual session
5 June 1997

1997/16. Report on the meeting of the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education

The Executive Board

Takes note of the report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education on its sixth meeting held in Bucharest, Romania, on 5 and 6 May 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/18) and the recommendations contained therein.

Annual session
5 June 1997

1997/17. Report on the meeting of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy

The Executive Board

Takes note of the report of the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee on Health Policy on its thirty-first session held at WHO Headquarters in Geneva on 19 and 20 May 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/19) and the recommendations contained therein.

Annual session
5 June 1997

1997/18. Modified system for allocation of general resources for programmes

The Executive Board

1. Commends the secretariat for its implementation of decision 1996/34 (E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1) on the allocation of general resources and the work undertaken in close consultation with the Executive Board in revising the current general resources allocation system;

2. Stresses its determination to give higher priority to the needs of children in low-income countries, in particular the least developed countries (LDCs) and those of sub-Saharan Africa, in line with General Assembly resolution 51/186 of 16 December 1996 on Progress at mid-decade on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children, and with relevant decisions of the Executive Board and the UNICEF Mission Statement, and recalls particularly, in this context, paragraphs 10, 11 and 12 of resolution 51/186 on the need for a substantial increase in resources, while re-emphasizing the importance and urgent need to increase the general resources for UNICEF;

3. Reaffirms the principles of eligibility of all recipient countries on the basis of the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations development system, in line with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

4. Takes note of the modified system for the allocation of general resources available for programmes, as described in document E/ICEF/1997/P/L.17;

5. Endorses the modified system for allocation of general resources as outlined in the annex to the present decision and requests the Executive Director to implement it accordingly;

6. Stresses the need to monitor thoroughly the impact of the modified system on situations of children in countries near or above graduation levels;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on the implementation of the present decision, particularly on the use of the 7 per cent set aside for flexibility, on a regular basis in her annual report, as well as at any critical junction during the implementation;

8. *Decides* to review in 2003 and taking into account the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly in 2001 decided in paragraph 27 of above-mentioned resolution 51/186, the modified system for allocation of general resources in order to improve its different components for its continuation, *inter alia* with the aim of increasing substantially the allocation of general resources to the LDCs and to sub-Saharan Africa, and *requests* the Executive Director to provide the Executive Board with a comprehensive report to this end.

Annex

ALLOCATION OF GENERAL RESOURCES WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MODIFIED SYSTEM, BEGINNING IN 1999

I. GENERAL RESOURCES FOR PROGRAMMES

1. The general resources for programmes are defined as the direct input to achieve the objectives of a specific programme or project for development cooperation available within the "regular resources" (cf. harmonization of budgets) of UNICEF. The modified system for the allocation of general resources applies only to this portion of the "regular resources", thus not to those for the support budget or to supplementary funds ("other resources"). For example, in 1996, the general resources available for programmes amounted to $317 million as compared to support budget resources of $246 million or supplementary funds of $545 million.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MODIFIED SYSTEM FOR ALLOCATION OF GENERAL RESOURCES

2. The modified system continues to be based on the three existing core criteria - under-five mortality rate (U5MR), gross national product (GNP) per capita and child population - and aims at:

(a) Giving progressively higher priority to the children of low-income countries, in particular the LDCs and those of sub-Saharan Africa;

(b) Ensuring the continued use of the moral authority of UNICEF to advocate for children's rights and needs as well as ensuring high-quality policy and advice;

(c) Allocating general resources sufficient to strengthen the effective implementation of programmes in the respective countries;

(d) Accommodating evolving needs and special circumstances of children through an appropriate degree of flexibility.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ALLOCATION OF GENERAL RESOURCES

A. *Main features of the allocation*

3. The main features of the allocations are as follows:

(a) At least two thirds of general resources for programmes will be allocated on the basis of the three core criteria (U5MR; GNP per capita; child population);

(b) Each country with a UNICEF country programme shall receive an allocation on the basis of the three core criteria, using the existing formula and refined weighting system given in annex I of document E/ICEF/1997/P/L.17;

(c) Each country with a UNICEF country programme shall receive a minimum allocation of $600,000 for core programming. This amount will be maintained when general resources levels increase or remain constant. If general resources levels decrease, the minimum allocation shall be reduced by the same proportion;

(d) The minimum allocation will be used exclusively for programme assistance, the support budget costs being covered by other resources beyond the minimum allocation;

(e) No LDC is to receive an allocation below its calculated level under the current system;

(f) Abrupt changes in country allocations shall be avoided by limiting them to a maximum of 10 per cent compared with the previous year's level;

(g) Countries having reached a combined threshold of GNP per capita above $2,895 and a U5MR of less than 30 per 1,000 live births shall gradually be phased out of the allocation of general resources for programme assistance, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5 (b) below;

(h) Countries covered by the three multi-country programmes shall continue to receive a combined lump sum sufficient for viable and effective programme intervention;

(i) Special programmes shall continue to be funded from general resources as approved by the Executive Board;

(j) Seven per cent of the general resources for programmes will be set aside to respond flexibly to the great diversity in country situations as well as to evolving needs and special circumstances;

(k) The bulk of the net income from the sale of greeting cards and other products in developing countries shall continue to be allocated to the country of origin to finance Executive Board-approved unfunded supplementary-funded programmes;

(l) The estimated non-reimbursed year-end balance of the Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) will be allocated to individual countries on a case-by-case basis, charged against general resources set aside for this purpose.

B. Utilization of the 7 per cent set aside for flexibility

4. Allocations out of this portion of the general resources for programmes are to be decided upon by the Executive Director, aiming at:

(a) Encouraging excellence in performance;

(b) Responding to emerging opportunities to benefit children;

(c) Cushioning the impact of shortfalls in the estimated general resources available for programmes on country allocations;

(d) Reducing imbalances between general resources and supplementary funds for Executive Board-approved country programmes. In cases of competition between similar situations in different countries for the set-aside resources available, priority shall be given to the needs of low-income countries, particularly LDCs;

(e) Avoiding sudden changes in the level of general resource allocations to individual countries resulting from the implementation of the modified system.

C. Modalities for implementation of the modified system

5. The modalities for implementation are as follows:

(a) The gradual implementation of the modified system shall begin in 1999;

(b) The Executive Director shall monitor closely and evaluate the implementation and the impact of the modified system on the lives of children in all programme countries, particularly the situation of children in countries reaching the combined threshold of GNP per capita of $2,895 and of U5MR of 30 per 1,000 live births. The Executive Director shall enter an open dialogue with countries near or above graduation level with the aim of examining possibilities for compensating general resources from UNICEF with resources from government (e.g., cost-sharing of continued UNICEF activities) or other sources (e.g., supplementary funding);

(c) The Executive Director shall report to the Executive Board on the implementation of the modified system, particularly on the use of the 7 per cent set aside for flexibility, on a regular basis in her annual report, as well as at any critical junction when she deems it appropriate to draw the Executive Board's early attention to difficulties encountered or envisaged during the implementation. In any case, each annual report shall contain a specific annex (e.g., charts comparing percentages of shares really disbursed per regions and country categories with share targets set) assessing the evolution of and the experience with the modified system during the past period of implementation;

(d) The modified system for the allocation of general resources shall be reviewed by the Executive Board in 2003 in order either to assess its accuracy or adjust it to unexpected needs emerging during the first years of its implementation, and in any case to improve it in view of its continuation. To this purpose, the Executive Director will provide a comprehensive report on the progress made and the experience with the implementation of the modified system and on proposals for improvements, *inter alia*, ways and means to allocate 60 per cent of general resources to the LDCs and 50 per cent to sub-Saharan Africa.

Annual session
6 June 1997

1997/19. Ensuring children's rights to survival, development and protection in Africa

The Executive Board

1. *Recalls* its decision 1995/18 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), mindful of the UNICEF commitment to Africa as the region of greatest need and highest priority;

2. *Acknowledges* that the condition of children in a number of African countries remains critical due to socio-economic factors, man-made and natural disasters, violence and exploitation, as well as demographic growth and the scourge of HIV/AIDS;

3. *Takes note* of the progress report submitted by the Executive Director on ensuring children's rights to survival, protection and development in Africa (E/ICEF/1997/15), as well as the Executive Director's report on follow-up to the World Summit for Children (E/ICEF/1997/14), which indicate that although several African countries have made significant progress towards the World Summit goals, overall achievement is much slower than in other regions, especially in the areas of maternal and child mortality, malnutrition, basic education and sanitation;

4. Recognizes that in the current African context, the achievement of World Summit goals still constitutes a major challenge for most countries and urges the Executive Director to advocate for additional resources from both private and public sources for programmes in Africa to support efforts to accelerate the achievement of these goals as essential steps towards the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

5. Calls upon the Executive Director to continue to work with African Governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations to increase capacity in integrated health services using the Bamako Initiative approach; to expand efforts for the control and elimination of malaria; to improve the accessibility and quality of primary education, particularly for girls; to strengthen nutrition; and to accelerate progress in water supply and sanitation;

6. Urges the Executive Director:

(a) To expand UNICEF support for African children in need of special protection, including those in situations of armed conflict;

(b) To work in all sectors and with all its partners, particularly the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, to build African capacity to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS.

7. Recognizes the importance of the role of UNICEF in the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, which will enhance the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, and calls upon the Executive Director to ensure that UNICEF continues to play an active role in the inter-agency work to implement the Initiative;

8. Calls upon UNICEF to continue working with Governments and donors to promote the reallocation of national resources in favour of social sectors along the lines of the 20/20 Initiative;

9. Urges the Executive Director to continue to advocate for measures that reduce the official debt burden of African countries, including debt cancellation and debt conversion for social investment;

10. Requests the Executive Director to report on progress made in the implementation of the current decision on ensuring children's rights to survival, development and protection in Africa at the annual session of the Executive Board in 1999.

Annual session
6 June 1997

1997/20. Follow-up to the World Summit for Children

The Executive Board

1. Notes with appreciation the progress made towards the mid-decade goals established by the World Summit for Children;

2. Recognizes that the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a framework to ensure that all children's social, economic, cultural, political and civil rights, are guaranteed, and that achieving the Summit goals will be a major step towards ensuring all the basic rights of children;

3. Recognizes the enormous challenges ahead to meet the end-decade goals, especially in the areas of health, with a focus on under-five and maternal mortality, malnutrition, basic education and water and sanitation, and

requests UNICEF to give due consideration to children requiring special protection measures, such as those affected by child labour, sexual exploitation and disabilities;

4. Urges all Governments, the international community, the private sector, NGOs and other actors in civil society, the media and communities to reaffirm their commitment to children, and to allocate to the maximum extent additional human and financial resources to support the achievement of the Summit goals for the year 2000;

5. Requests the Executive Director to work with Governments to strengthen further national capacities for the collection and use of data, including data disaggregated by gender and age, to identify appropriate indicators that are relevant, comparable and timely to monitor progress towards the realization of children's rights and the World Summit goals, developing core indicators that will enable comparison between countries and additional indicators to reflect the country's reality;

6. Further urges all Governments to adopt appropriate strategies to ensure that the rights of all children are guaranteed, in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, by strengthening where necessary their national and subnational programmes of action, and in this connection, invites UNICEF to continue its cooperation with the Committee on the Rights of the Child in facilitating a national implementation and monitoring process of the Convention, as well as its reporting system;

7. Requests the Executive Director to support the Secretary-General in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/186 of 16 December 1996;

8. Also requests the Executive Director to take necessary action, as part of the country programme process, and in close cooperation with other agencies and bilateral donors, to advocate for and support efforts by national Governments and other relevant actors in civil society to achieve the Summit goals within the framework of national and subnational programmes of action;

9. Further requests the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board at its 1998 annual session on the steps taken to implement the strategy for improved nutrition of children and women in developing countries, taking into account the updated summary of progress at mid-decade, the major challenges that remain in this area for the fulfilment of the goals for the year 2000 and the need to develop a more integrated and cross-sectoral approach;

10. Further requests the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on the implementation of the present decision at the 1998 annual session.

Annual session
6 June 1997

1997/21. Implementation of UNICEF policies and strategies on children in need of special protection measures

The Executive Board,

Having reviewed the report on "Implementation of UNICEF policies and strategies on children in need of special protection measures" (E/ICEF/1997/16),

1. Endorses the overall approach for implementing the policy on children in need of special protection measures as contained in the report, taking into account the comments made by delegations at the present session, in particular with regard to the need of priority-setting, the definition and adaptation of implementation mechanisms, its financial implications as well as criteria and mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation;

2. Requests the Executive Director to submit an oral report and an accompanying conference room paper outlining progress on the above-mentioned items, including a time-frame for future action, to the Board at its 1998 annual session.

Annual session
6 June 1997

Third regular session

1997/22. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

The Executive Board

1. Approves the following recommendations of the Executive Director for programme cooperation as summarized in document E/ICEF/1997/P/L.18:

(a) $54,524,800 for general resources funding and $86,640,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in Africa, as follows:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1997/
Burundi	1998-1999	2 640 000	6 600 000	P/L.19
Cameroon	1998-2002	6 500 000	5 900 000	P/L.1/Add.1
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1998-1999	16 144 000	12 000 000	P/L.21
	1997	359 800		
Guinea-Bissau	1998-2002	4 500 000	7 000 000	P/L.2/Add.1
Mali	1998-2002	16 605 000	20 000 000	P/L.3/Add.1
Rwanda	1998-2000	4 860 000	31 140 000	P/L.20
Sierra Leone	1998-1999	2 916 000	4 000 000	P/L.22

(b) $17,511,460 for general resources funding and $115,625,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in the Americas and the Caribbean, as follows:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1997/
Bolivia	1998-2002	4 480 000	40 000 000	P/L.4/Add.1
Eastern Caribbean	1998-2002	6 000 000	15 000 000	P/L.6/Add.1
	1997	27 460		
Haiti	1998-1999	2 754 000	15 000 000	P/L.23
Venezuela	1998-2002	4 250 000	2 625 000	P/L.5/Add.1
Subregional: programme for the Andean region (PROANDES)	1998-2002		43 000 000	P/L.24

(c) $44,393,000 for general resources funding and $70,500,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in Asia, as follows:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1997/
India	1998	34 865 000	47 000 000	P/L.25
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1998-2002	5 265 000	19 500 000	P/L.7/Add.1
	1997	13 000		
Papua New Guinea	1998-2002	4 250 000	4 000 000	P/L.8/Add.1

(d) $6,000,000 for general resources funding and $5,000,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States, as follows:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1997/
CEE, CIS and the Baltic States	1998-1999	6 000 000	5 000 000	P/L.30

(e) $15,361,250 for general resources funding and $18,050,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa, as follows:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1997/
Algeria	1998-2000	2 748 000	1 600 000	P/L.26
Islamic Republic of Iran	1998-1999	2 700 000	1 000 000	P/L.27
	1997	321 250		
Iraq	1998	542 000		P/L.28
Jordan	1998-2002	4 250 000	1 350 000	P/L.10/Add.1
Palestinian children and women in:				
Jordan	1998-2000	600 000	600 000	P/L.29
Lebanon	1998-2000	1 050 000	1 500 000	P/L.29
Syrian Arab Republic	1998-2000	600 000	600 000	P/L.29
West Bank and Gaza	1998-2000	2 550 000	11 400 000	P/L.29

2. Approves the amount of $2,338,465 from general resources to cover expenditures against write-off and overexpenditures due to revaluation as summarized in table 4 of E/ICEF/1997/P/L.18.

Third regular session
10 September 1997

1997/23. Supply operations

The Executive Board

Takes note of the report on supply operations as contained in document E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.14.

Third regular session
11 September 1997

1997/24. Financial medium-term plan for the period 1997-2000

The Executive Board

Approves the medium-term plan as a framework of projections for 1997-2000 (summarized in table 4 of document E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.10), including the preparation of up to $379 million in programme expenditures from general resources to be submitted to the Executive Board in 1998 (shown in table 3, item 3, of document E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.10). The amount is subject to the availability of resources and to the condition that estimates of income and expenditure made in this plan continue to be valid.

Third regular session
12 September 1997

1997/25. Interim budget allocation for January 1998

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of decision 1997/3 (E/ICEF/1997/12 (Part I)) that, in order to maintain the integrity of both the country programme recommendation and the integrated budget processes, the "Biennial support budget" for 1998-1999, on an exceptional basis, be reviewed by the Executive Board at its first regular session in January 1998;

2. Resolves:

(a) That an interim one month budget allocation for January 1998 is approved in the amount of $22.0 million pending the approval of the biennial budget for 1998-1999;

(b) That the interim allocation does not include any proposed changes that may be contained in the 1998-1999 budget proposal;

3. Agrees that the interim budget allocation will be absorbed in the 1998-1999 budget proposals.

Third regular session
12 September 1997

1997/26. Interim financial report and statements

The Executive Board

Takes note of the "Interim financial report and statements for the year ended 31 December 1996, the first year of the biennium 1996-1997" (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.11).

Third regular session
12 September 1997

1997/27. Proposed terms of reference of the World Health Organization/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund Coordinating Committee on Health

The Executive Board

1. Reaffirms the need for close coordination at all levels among UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the area of health policy and programming;

2. Takes note of the proposed terms of reference for the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health (CCH) approved by the WHO Executive Board in May 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/21);

3. Notes that modifications are needed to the terms of reference. Specifically, the Board proposes the following amendments:

(a) To paragraph 2 of the terms of reference approved by the WHO Executive Board, add a new first subparagraph as follows: "To facilitate the coordination of health policies and programmes of the three agencies";

(b) To reformulate the original first and third subparagraphs of paragraph 2, as follows (new language is underlined):

> "To review the overall needs for strategic, operational and technical coordination in the fields of maternal, child, adolescent and women's health, with a prioritized focus on disease and health ramifications based on WHO mortality and morbidity statistics, and reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, to ensure regular exchange of information in these areas and to make recommendations to the respective Executive Boards for follow-up action by the secretariats, as appropriate, with due regard for the respective mandates of the agencies involved";
>
> "To receive and review progress and assessment reports presented by the Director-General of WHO, the Executive Director of UNICEF or the Executive Director of UNFPA on activities pertaining to the health of children, young people and women, with a prioritized focus on disease and health ramifications based on WHO mortality and morbidity statistics, including reproductive health, and to review any reorientation of strategy that may be necessary to meet agreed objectives, with due regard for the respective mandates of the agencies involved";

4. Requests the Executive Director to transmit the Board's position to the Executive Board of UNFPA, in anticipation of its mid-September meeting, and to the WHO Executive Board;

5. Further requests the Executive Director:

(a) To discuss with WHO, UNFPA and the World Bank the possibility of the World Bank joining the CCH;

(b) To discuss with WHO and UNFPA:

(i) The appropriate division of tasks and responsibilities (policy and strategy development, development of best practices and implementation at headquarters and at the country level) among the individual agencies;

(ii) The frequency of meetings of the CCH: the UNICEF Executive Board proposes that the CCH meet annually;

(iii) The site of meetings: the Executive Board proposes that the CCH meet alternately in Geneva and New York.

Third regular session
12 September 1997

1997/28. Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF

The Executive Board,

Having reviewed the information provided on the UNICEF system of oversight and the activities of the Office of Internal Audit and the Division of Evaluation, Policy and Planning (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.12),

1. Endorses the framework of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for performance monitoring and oversight set out in the report;

2. Welcomes the proposal by the Executive Director to issue an annual report on internal audit activities to the Executive Board starting in 1998;

3. Requests the secretariat, in order to implement fully decision 1996/32, paragraph 5 (E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1), to produce a chart with available information on budget implications, human resources implications, and efficiency and effectiveness gains in connection with the new roles and responsibilities of headquarters, regional offices and country offices, prior to informal consultations on the 1998-1999 UNICEF budget in the fourth quarter of 1997;

4. Requests an assessment of the results achieved by the management excellence process to date, at the headquarters, regional and, in particular, field levels with specific emphasis on programme impact to be provided to the Board at its 1998 annual session.

Third regular session
12 September 1997

1997/29. Effective partnership between the Executive Board and the secretariat of UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. Commends the "Group of Volunteers" for the work it has done since 1996 on the issue of improving collaboration between the Executive Board and the secretariat (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.13);

2. Encourages interested countries to join the "Group of Volunteers" in working further on the guidelines, in an open-ended group, in close collaboration with the Board and the secretariat (formal and informal consultations);

3. Decides to take up this issue no later than at its annual session 1998, based on a revised proposal by the "Group of Volunteers".

Third regular session
12 September 1997

1997/30. Programme of work for 1998

The Executive Board

Adopts the following dates and programme of work for 1998:

First regular session (26-30 January)	- Country notes (1995/8) - Biennial support budget for 1998-1999 (1997/3), including report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) - Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO) work plan and proposed budget - Oral report on implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors (1997/10) - Mid-term reviews and major evaluation reports (1995/8) - Report of the Executive Director (Part I): Annual report to the Economic and Social Council (1995/5) - 1998 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award - Oral report on resource mobilization strategy
Annual session (1-5 June)	- Report of the Executive Director (Part II) (1995/5) - Follow-up to the World Summit for Children (1992/5 and 1997/20) - Report on UNICEF activities as follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (1995/29) - Report on UNICEF information, publications and communication (E/ICEF/1997/12 (Part III), para. 73) - Oral report on progress made in the implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF (1997/9) - Oral report on the implementation of the policy regarding National Committees (1996/33) - Oral report on implementation of policies and strategies on children in need of special protection measures (with accompanying conference room paper) (1997/21) - Management Excellence Programme assessment (1997/28) - Report of Board member field visits (1992/32)

Second regular session
(8-11 September)

- Country programme recommendations (CPRs) (1995/8)
- Review of the consideration and approval process of CPRs (1995/8)
- Oral report on decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council (1995/38 and E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1, para. 470)
- Medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 (1990/1)
- Financial matters:
  - (a) UNICEF financial report/statements
  - (b) GCO financial report/statements
  - (c) Report to the Board of Auditors and ACABQ
  - (d) Report on internal audit activities (1997/28)
- Programme of work for 1999
